

# FIRST WED, THEN WON.

By E. MARIE CLARK, A. W. U.



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BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF COOPERSTOWN



# FIRST WED, THEN WON.

BY

E. MARIE CLARK, A. W. U.

ONEONTA, N. Y.

THE ONEONTA PRESS,

1901.



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### AUTHOR'S NOTE.

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**I**T is not my intention to write a history of Cooperstown, only so far as this story coincides with history. But, as there has been many changes in some of the places named within this book, since 1885, some explanations have been necessary, many of these places having been made famous by the pen of James Fenimore Cooper.

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VIEW OF COOPER MONUMENT



## PREFACE.

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### COOPERSTOWN—THE LAKE AND RIVER.

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Nearly midway within the Empire State—  
Did Cooper to the world relate;  
How beneath the fairest of azure skies  
The "Glimmerglass" in beauty lies.

On the southern shore of this fairy lake  
Cooper his home resolved to make;  
And send forth his "Leatherstocking Tales"  
Of Cooperstown and its surrounding vales.

The Susquehanna is but a gently flowing stream,  
Where, through the trees, it is pierced by a golden sunbeam;  
Though the outlet of this lake 'tis crooked and long  
That Chesapeake Bay ends its murmuring song.

A monument to Cooper's memory in grandeur stands,  
Just across the lake on sacred lands,  
Where the white stones tell of the struggling men  
Who, long years ago, wielded a quill pen.

In the Episcopal churchyard, near his old home,  
Cooper sleeps his last sleep; no more to roam  
From the scenes of his childhood through fiction land;  
For he's o'er the river with the Heavenly band,

MARIE.



## FIRST WED, THEN WON.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE WIDOW.

COLONEL Belmont was a lawyer of some renown, when, shortly after the Civil War closed, he came to Oneonta, a thriving little hamlet just twenty-two miles from Otsego lake, situated on the west shore of the beautiful Susquehanna.

After a few years' work in his profession, death claimed him among its victims, leaving Mrs. Belmont to struggle on alone in the battle of life. Though her life was rather uneventful and commonplace, and a continual struggle for daily bread, she seemed quite happy.

One child, a girl, blessed her lonely life. This girl was six or seven years of age at the

time of her father's death. Mrs. Belmont claimed no desire to live at that time, only for the sake of this little girl. The girl seemed to care for naught but books. These she seemed to devour. Being of a bashful and retiring disposition, many prophesied that she was too dreamy to accomplish whatever she might undertake.

Not far from the Belmont home resided a family by the name of Mitchel, who had known Mrs. Belmont since childhood. Rumor said Mrs. Belmont had married the colonel out of spite, after jilting Mitchel. Be that as it may, the families were firm friends at this time; and whatever the widow did for the welfare of herself and child was by the advice of the Mitchels.

Orabelle Belmont was ten years old when her mother mortgaged their home to Mr. Mitchel, for money to invest in a millinery establishment. Time passed on and the widow was successful in her business until ill health came upon her, then she gradually failed until her

physician said she must cease her labors. That terrible disease consumption had fastened its cruel fangs upon this cherished mother.

“Mamma,” said Orabelle one day in the spring, when out of doors the birds were giving forth joyous carols, and the grass was putting forth its tender shoots of vivid green, while all was bright with the golden rays of the morning sun, “Mamma, I believe I could trim the hats and keep the shop running, if you would only show me how.”

Mrs. Belmont had been telling her daughter of their financial troubles; she thought their shop would have to be abandoned; and this was Orabelle’s idea of arising from their slough of despond.

“You, child! No one would buy them if they thought a little girl like you had trimmed them,” she said, with a half chiding smile.

“But, mamma,” continued Orabelle so pleadingly, “you know I have helped you many times in your hurried season; and, you said I did them as well as Nora did!”

“Yes, I know that; but then I was by to show you just how to do them. Now I can not take one stitch,” she sadly answered, for oh! so vainly did she wish for strength to care for her child.

“Oh, mamma, you said if you had not been sick, you could have paid the mortgage in another year. Now, let me stay home from school. Nora and I will try to keep the shop open until you are able to work again. You know your chair can be moved into the shop, and you can tell us what we ought to do.”

Mrs. Belmont sent for the Mitchels and placed her case before them for advice. They thought it well to encourage the child, so their advice was: “Give the girls a trial.”

“But,” said Mrs. Mitchel, after they arrived home, “that child is too bashful to ever succeed. Nora Wells may carry them through, for she has just the ability and courage to make a grand success in life.”

“I hope all will be well with them,” said Mr. Mitchel; “one thing certain, Mary, I shall not

hurry Lillie Belmont for that money, should she fail to pay it when due."

"Do not, even though you should lose it," she said pleadingly.

"She has paid it all now, but three hundred," he said, musingly.

"She would have paid that this year, then," Mrs. Mitchel said in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, without a doubt," he answered with a sigh.

Those two girls—one a child of thirteen—gained the good will of all their old customers and of many new ones beside. But they were not successful financially, for they were easy prey for sharpers. When the time came to pay the mortgage, only money enough to pay the interest was in their possession; but a kind hearted man held that mortgage.

Mrs. Belmont grew worse that fall, compelled to keep her room all the time. Then she wrote to her sister in Albany, telling her just how she was situated, but no answer did she receive.

Then she was sure her sister would never

forgive her, because she had married a soldier of the rebel army.

“But, Orabelle, she might forgive me now,” she said, some two months after she sent the letter.

“Never mind, mamma! I will soon be old enough to care for you!”

Oh, how bravely she said it.

Her mother gazed at her fondly, then, as she smoothed the hair back from her brow, she said:

“Orabelle, you must promise me one thing—if I am taken away—I want you to write to your Aunt Kate and tell her I am dead. Tell her I always loved her. Tell her my love goes back to the time of our childhood when she, brother Ross and myself, used to gather around our mother’s knee, and she would teach us our little evening prayer—just as I have taught you, Orabelle—and that as I prayed then, just so I pray now for forgiveness of all my wrong doing. Tell her I said if she could not forgive me when living—to forgive me now for the sake



of my child. Remember, you are to write after I am dead—not before.”

“But mamma, why tell me these things now?”

“Because I can tell you now, and there may come a time when you will be glad to know what my wishes were.”

“Mamma, you spoke of a brother—where is he?”

“I do not know. He went to California some time ago—I think ten years ago. We have never heard from him since.”

“That is strange! Was he angry at you, like Aunt Kate?”

“No. Ross said if I loved your father that was enough. But, dear child, you are not old enough to understand these things, so we had best not talk of them.”

After a moment's silence she resumed:

“Orabelle, you will find in my journal a complete history of my life, which I wish you to read after my death. There you will find the address of your Aunt Kate—unless she has

changed her residence. Promise me never to read it as long as I live, unless I give you permission. Will you promise?"

"Dear mama, I would rather not promise! But, if you wish it—then I must comply with your wishes. I promise."

---

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MESSAGE.

Some find work and some find rest,  
And so the weary world goes on;  
Some hearts beat while some hearts break,  
I often wonder why it is so.

FATHER RYAN.

THE union of the Mitchels was blessed by one child, a son. Claud Mitchel was one of those happy-go-lucky sort of boys, of sunny disposition, bright blue eyes and dark brown hair. He was attending school at the "parlor city" just at this time and had been for some years.

If his father had told him at any time to pass through a burning building or even to swim

over Niagara rapids and said it was right, Claud would have attempted the feat; for his regard for his father verged on the side of worship. As he said sometimes to his chums:

“ I have a perfect father, boys. I have complete faith in him, that he would no more do a wrong act than you know I would wrong you; or no more than I would cut off this right hand of mine.”

At the request of his mother, Claud came home for the Christmas vacation, an unusual happening, but this year Christmas was the twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage and Claud's eighteenth birthday.

Their friends gave them a surprise on Christmas night and left as tokens of friendship many beautiful and costly presents: for Claud a diamond scarf pin. He did not need it to remind him of his eighteenth birthday.

After their guests had departed and they were preparing to retire, there came a message requesting Mr. Mitchel to “ come immediately to Mrs. Belmont's.”

Mr. Mitchel hastened to comply; and hurriedly passed to the home of the widow. There he found the doctor bending over his patient, giving her stimulants to keep the breath of life from leaving her body. As he entered the room, he heard the widow ask the doctor how long he thought she might live.

“That is beyond my knowledge,” replied Dr. Groat; “I think you have strength to live a few hours—perhaps days. But you know that one more hemorrhage like this you have just had, cannot but make you weaker, and possibly break the brittle thread of life. If you have anything you wish to say to Mr. Mitchel before that time comes, you had better say it now, for he is here.”

“That was the reason I asked you to send for him,” she said; “I felt I could not live long, at best. Give him instructions concerning the cordial; then leave the room, but not the house, for we may need you.”

The doctor did as she bade him, then left the room.

As soon as they were alone, she asked:

“Did you hear what the doctor said?”

“Yes, but I cannot see why you sent for me now,” replied Mitchel.

“I will tell you in good time. You know just how my financial affairs are. You know about the mortgage. You nor I do not know what will become of my child if I leave her like that. Can you tell me what to do or to say, that will benefit her after I am gone?”

“Mrs. Belmont, do not worry over her, I will look after her welfare!” he said, reassuringly.

“You say so, but do you realize what that promise means?”

“I think I do!”

“I will test it now!” Then after a moment she added, “Send for your son—he is home I have heard—and ask him to marry my child.”

“Preposterous, woman! they are children!”

“For the sake of by-gone days, Frank, grant this my dying request,” she pleaded; “if you had asked me this same question I should have answered you differently.”

“How could you!” he cried, “Claud is only eighteen; Orabelle but a child of fourteen; and neither of them can know what marriage means!”

“I should have told you if the children did not object after they were told the circumstances—that I would consent. Won’t you send for Claud, and——”

“I will send for Claud, and we will see,” he interrupted.

He thought it but the vagaries of a dying consumptive and, though somewhat startled by the request, he would humor her enough to send for his son. He left the room and sent a message for him.

When the message came to Mrs. Mitchel she sent for Claud and gave him the message saying she thought it a strange proceeding for midnight of Christmas night.

Claud arrived after a few moments’ delay, and his father soon laid the facts before him in the presence of the widow.

Claud looked at his father after he had

finished his story, then at the wasted form at his side, then back at his father as much as to say; "I don't comprehend."

The widow saw the look and asked: "Claud, won't you grant a dying woman's request and make my child your wife?"

"Mrs. Belmont, I have not seen your daughter since she was ten years old. She seems but a little girl to me!"

"A little girl may become a wonderful woman, Claud," she said, thoughtfully.

"That is true—but I am a boy, you might say. I have no means of support, I am dependent on my father for my support. Think you it would be right for me to marry, and bring home a child wife for him to educate and support?" he asked, for the subject was a disagreeable one at that moment.

"Claud, your father sent for you at my request; do you think he would have done so, if he had not been willing for you to contract this marriage?"

"I suppose not," he said thoughtfully, then

turned and walked several times across the room. Then he turned back to the bedside and said:

“Does my father ask me to make this sacrifice for him? That lady’s child may object!” And every particle of color receded from his cheeks as he finished speaking, for he thought what that promise would mean.

“My son,” replied his father, “if you have no entanglements to hold you back, I would that you could save this child from being thrown on this cold world’s mercy.”

“Father, if you request me to marry this child, I will—providing she will let me,” he answered, as though he did not wish to grant the request.

“I do request it, if you have nothing against the marriage except her youth.”

“Then it shall be! even though it shall cause us a life-time of woe,” he said.

“God bless you!” cried the widow, while the shadow of death crept o’er her face.

“Now, will Claud’s promise to marry your



child, relieve you of that fear for her, that you had?" asked Mr. Mitchel, in a relieved tone.

"Yes, partially. But he may change his mind after I am dead." And turning her eyes to Claud's face with a searching look, she asked, with tears in her eyes:

"Claud, will you marry her to-night?"

He started back from the bed as if in agony, then quickly said:

"There is no need of hurry. I have given you my promise, and that I never break!"

"But I would like to see you married before I die!" cried the dying woman.

"Madam, I am preparing for college. I am to return to school this morning. I will finish my studies, then I will fulfil my vow!"

"No, no?" she wildly cried, partly rising and clasping his hand, "give her your name for protection—go back to your school as you intended. Let her go home with your father when I am gone."

"Father! would you advise me to grant her

request?" and Claud turned away from the pleading eyes of the dying woman.

"I do not know what would be best—but, it would comfort her if you would do so," the father slowly said.

"Then, father, I will. Send for the child—let me see my bride-to-be. But one thing I request—do not compel that child to marry me," and he went to the other side of the bed and sat down as he finished speaking.

Mr. Mitchel sent for Orabelle. She came into the room with a scared and sleepy look in her eyes. She went to the side of her mother and asked why they sent for her, scarcely noticing the strangers.

"My child, I am dying," her mother said, as she clasped the child to her bosom; and, as the child began to cry, she resumed:

"Do not cry! you and I have talked of death and what you must do after my death. Now, do you think you could grant my dying request after we tell you just how you are situated?"

The girl hesitated a moment then said:

“Mamma, tell me and then I can say,” and she arose to her feet and closely watched her mother as she listened.

They soon told her, how, if her aunt Kate Grey should not provide for her that she would have to enter a home for the friendless or do as they now proposed, laying all the facts before her.

Then her mother asked:

“Orabelle, will you marry this young man, Claud Mitchel, to-night?”

A pause. Then laying one hand on the bowed head of Claud, she drew Orabelle closer to her side with the other hand as she asked:

“Won’t you, dear daughter, and then receive your mother’s dying blessing?”

“Must I marry him, mamma?” she asked in a dazed sort of tone.

“I do not say you must, dear child. But, if you will marry Claud, I can die happy.”

“Mamma, I would do anything for your happiness,” she cried, “but this seems so strange! Other girls do not marry like this;

they have a wedding; lots of pretty new gowns, and, oh, mamma! I cannot marry so strangely," she cried out, as though in agony, then burst into tears.

Claud was deeply moved at the sight of her tears. He arose and went to her side, saying soothingly, as he put his hand upon her head:

"Dear child, you shall not if you do not think you can to please your mother."

"Mother," she said after a moment's thought, "would it please you very much, to have me marry him?" pointing to Claud.

"More than I can tell you now!"

"Then I will. Yet I cannot be what a bride should be. Am I?" she asked as she turned her eyes in a beseeching look to first one then the other.

She consented to their plans, yet more to please her mother, than because she understood what she was doing at that time.

Mrs. Mitchel and a minister were sent for next.

Orabelle went from the room at her mother's

request, and dressed herself in her white dress; then returned to the death chamber and told them she was ready to comply with her mother's request.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ORABELLE'S SINGULAR MARRIAGE.

“Marriage. It is most genial to a soul refined,  
When love can smile, unblushing, unconcealed,  
When mutual thoughts and words and acts are kind,  
And inmost hopes and feelings are revealed,  
When interest, duty, trust, together bind,  
And the heart's deep affections are unsealed,  
When for each other live the kindred pair,—  
Here indeed is a picture fair!”

MRS. Mitchel arrived at the widow's house before the minister and was soon in possession of the facts of this strange case. At first she seemed to think it would be sacriligious because “True marriages,” it is said, “are planned in heaven.” After she thought the subject over a few moments, she said:

“If the children are willing to marry, I do not know that I ought to object.”

“Mother, we have promised — you have always taught me that a promise was sacred.

If any promise is sacred, then this one is," Claud said, solemnly.

"True my son. Never make a promise unless you intend to keep it, let it be ever so trivial. Have you, dear children, thought of this as a life-long promise, that binds you together?"

"I have, mother. Yet, I will keep it," Claud said firmly.

"I do not think I fully understand all I have heard to-night," said Orabelle; "but this much I do know, if I am a little girl, that I can keep a promise just as well as grown people. I have promised my mother to be Claud's wife; and a faithful one I will prove," she added almost vehemently."

"Well said, little one," said Mr. Mitchel, for he was more than pleased with her answer, "I believe you have the right spirit after all."

She turned her eyes to him with a mute entreaty in them which seemed to say: "I do not understand you, now."

After the Rev. Geo. A. Bell arrived and gave

his consent to perform the wedding ceremony at such an unseasonable hour—five-thirty in the morning—Dr. Groat was asked to return and witness the marriage. Neither the minister nor doctor knew the reason of this singular marriage, only that Mrs. Belmont wished to see them married before she died.

Claud and Orabelle stood beside the bed in which lay her dying mother, and those solemn words were said, which made her the child bride of Claud Mitchel.

Orabelle's mother kissed them and wished them a lifetime of happiness, and called on God to bless them for their noble sacrifice.

It seemed more like a funeral, to those present, than a wedding party.

The minister returned to his home about six o'clock.

Dr. Groat was nearly ready to leave the house, but had gone to bid Claud good-bye, when the widow called him to her side. He obeyed the call.

“Claud,” said his mother with a light laugh,

as the doctor turned away, "you must bid your little wife good-bye now, and return to our home. You must be ready for the seven-thirty train."

"Mother, I feel these are solemn vows I have made this morning; I pray God to deal with me in proportion as I keep these vows! I go back to my studies to-day. I will work hard to be all that you wish me to be. But, hark you! I leave my bride—little wife, as you call her—in your hands. Be good to her for my sake. She, indeed, is a child," he said, as he put his hand on his mother's shoulder; "may this night's work never come back to you and father as a curse," he added, and went to the side of his bride who was conversing with Mr. Mitchel.

"Little wife," said Claud half tenderly, yet more as men address little children, and reaching out his hand in a friendly manner, "you and I must say good-bye now. I must leave you on this, our wedding morn. I will return to my wife when my education is finished; then



we will try to keep these solemn vows you and I have made this morning. Give me one kiss to remind me of the bride I leave so soon," he pleaded.

"You may kiss me," she said shyly.

He took the kiss. Then in a joking way, said:

"How many men will I find have kissed my little wife, when I return to her years hence?"

"You think I am a little girl and do not know what is right, Claud Mitchel," she cried, as she stamped her foot in her wrath. "Let me tell you now that no man shall kiss my lips again with my consent, until you return and ask the first kiss as my husband! Let me say again, I have not kissed you nor will I until that time comes, if it be twenty years hence!"

Her eyes shone like two stars. Her cheeks were ablaze with anger and she looked ten years older at that moment.

"Mother, you hear that," exclaimed Claud, as his mother came to their side, "do you call

that a child? Look at her eyes, they sparkle like diamonds."

How much more he might have said will remain unknown, for just then Dr. Groat called them to the bed-side; and they were just in time to see the last gasp for breath of the widow Belmont.

Yes, this was truly a death-bed marriage.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SEVERAL CHANGES.

Therefore, great heart, bear up! thou art but type  
Of what all lofty spirits endure, that fain  
Would win men back to strength and peace  
through love;  
Each hath his lonely peak and on each heart  
Envy, or scorn, or hatred, tears lifelong  
With vulture beak; yet the high soul is left,  
And faith, which is but hope grown wise, and  
love,  
And patience which at last shall overcome.

LOWELL.

WHEN Dr. Groat said Mrs. Belmont was dead, Orabelle fell across the body of her mother, sobbed and begged her to speak once more to her. She sank down then as if she had swooned.

Claud begged her to go with him, but no words of the living seemed to reach her ears, for she was nearly frantic with grief. Claud called the doctor, and they raised her from the bed and carried her into another room, placed her in an incumbent position and began flicking her face with cold water. Then the use of aromatic salts was resorted to, after which she slowly revived only to swoon again and again.

While working over her, all thoughts of going back to school had left Claud until he heard the whistle of the train he should have taken.

“Mother, you hear that!” he cried, starting up then sinking into a near-by chair.

“Yes,” she said, “you are too late!”

“For this train, but I must go on the next!”

When Orabelle had partially revived the doctor gave her a sleeping potion, and told them it was best or she would have a severe illness to pay for this night’s excitement.

Mrs. Mitchel saw that all was done for the

widow that human hands could do; then she sent Claud home to rest all he could before his departure. She stayed with Orabelle until after the funeral. Then she helped the young girl gather all her worldly possessions together, and remove them to the home of the Mitchels.

Some four weeks after her entrance of her husband's home, or the home of the Mitchels, Orabelle was reading her mother's journal and came to the address of Kate Grey.

"There," she said in surprise, "I had forgotten what mamma said! I will write at once."

She found Mrs. Mitchel and handing her the book, said: "Mother, read mamma's journal, and then tell me if I may comply with her spoken wishes! Listen, while I tell you what she said to me some time before she died."

She then repeated her mother's words.

"I think you ought to write to your aunt," Mrs. Mitchel said, after reading the diary.

The letter was soon on its way to Albany. Three weeks afterwards a letter was received

by Mrs. Mitchel from Mrs. Grey. That letter was full of bitter regrets over not forgiving her sister before her death. The news of Orabelle's singular marriage had been the means of changing her opinion.

She also wrote for Orabelle to come and live with her till Claud should be ready to claim his wife. Mrs. Grey thought it would not look well for Orabelle to be educated by Claud's parents.

Then, "Albany was a far better place for her to attend school," she wrote.

The Mitchels thought it might be better for all if she did go, though they had learned to love the girl better in those two months than they thought it possible; and then, Claud would be home in June.

They were fearful lest Claud should become more acquainted with his "little wife" and love her; if he should, then they knew that he would never finish his education.

So Orabelle changed her home again. Mr. Mitchel accompanied her to Albany and saw

her safe in her aunt's care. When he bade her good-bye he said:

“Orabelle, won't you kiss me good-bye?”

“Yes,” she said.

She smiled as he bent down to kiss her, and quickly turned her head so he kissed her cheek.

“Why is this! won't you kiss me?” he quickly asked.

“Didn't I say that no man should kiss my lips until my husband returned to me?” she slowly asked.

“Yes, puss; but you will forget that soon,” he answered, with a hearty laugh, as though he thought it all a joke.

“Never!” she almost screamed.

“What does this mean, Mr. Mitchel?” asked Mrs. Grey.

“Ask her, she will tell you,” and he laughed as he said it, for he still thought it the whim of a child.

After Mr. Mitchel returned home he wrote to Claud, telling him of the change in Orabelle's residence.

The next evening after Claud's return to school, at Binghamton, there was a party at the home of one of the students. Claud was asked to take a young lady friend to this party.

"No," said Claud, "I shall ask no lady to go with me."

"Why! You have asked Alice Haynes to go with you before, why not to-night?" asked Bert Lent.

"I know, but now it is a different matter."

Lent gave a prolonged whistle, then asked:

"What ails you, Claud?"

"Nothing," he said, almost petulantly.

"Nothing,—yes there is something the trouble! You came back last evening, looking as though you had lost the best friend you had on earth—"

"I have, my mother-in-law," he interrupted almost sarcastically, while something like a smile curved his lips at the other's apparent surprise.

"Your mother-in-law! oh! that's too good, Claud! Your mother——"

"You need not say it again," he interrupted.

“Listen! Yesterday morning I was married; and not two hours afterward my wife’s mother died. That was the reason I did not get here until evening. Do not ask me more now,” he said as Lent started to speak, “but let us away with the others. Come!”

It was not long before his story was partially known among the students.

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## CHAPTER V.

CLAUD MITCHEL.

We see but half the causes of our deeds,  
 \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*  
 And heedless of the encircling spirit-world  
 Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us  
 All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.  
 \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*  
 We pass unconscious o’er a slender bridge,  
 The momentary work of unseen hands,  
 Which crumbles down behind us  
 \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*  
 Content ourselves to call the builder Chance.

LOWELL.

MOTHER, I have been so delighted with home these past three days, that I had forgotten to ask after my little wife; is she



well?" asked Claud Mitchel the next June after that singular wedding some six months before.

"She was well when she wrote last. She wrote bidding me say to you that she had kept her vow so long, and should till you came to claim her," his mother replied.

"I must confess, mother, that at times I cannot make it seem I am a married man."

And he laughed lightly as he said it; then, a sober light came into his eyes, and he added:

"Her vow! Bah! What does that child know about a vow? She will forget it before she is eighteen years old, if she is like most womankind—"

"Claud, I am ashamed of you!" his mother interrupted. "Look out that you are not the first one to break that marriage vow," his mother gravely added.

"Never fear for me! Men keep their vows better than children," he saucily yet bitterly cried.

"Claud, you do not regret your hasty marriage so soon, do you?" she asked in

fear lest he had met some woman he did love.

“I do not know that I regret it, yet I seem to feel it was a wrong way to treat that child—a wrong to force me to marry her, even though she was willing,” he said, a grave and far away look coming into his eyes.

“You should not say forced you to marry. You, certainly did as you wished.”

“Not wholly, mother,” he cried; “I could but see it was the wish of all. You know I could not refuse to do my father’s bidding, let it bring weal or woe.”

“Well! the deed is done and too late for regrets. I only hope, my son, that you may never meet another that you could love, for then your life would be one of misery, that would cause you more sorrow than this will, providing you both shall love each other, when you come to know each other better.”

“Mother, I make this vow, now, as I kneel at your feet,” and he threw himself down at her feet. “I will guard against all love with all

my strength of will power; and I will pray God to give me the strength to avoid all the snares set to catch this heart of mine! Will that ease your mind any?"

"Yes, if you can do this!"

"Time will prove me true or false," he said, slowly and with a very solemn air, as he arose and left the room.

"I hope it may be true," she said as the door closed.

Claud Mitchel placed himself under his father's commands again; and did not seek his child wife. They deemed it best for him to travel for a year, then enter a university in Germany. He complied with their wishes with a willing spirit, yet deep in his heart he thought it was a wrong way to treat the little wife.

\* \* \* \* \*

In San Francisco, one fine evening in August, sat some men playing cards at the Laurel Hotel. A euchre deck was in their hands. Let us glance at them again. Certainly we know one of them.

That young man, who has just commenced to shuffle the cards, as we came to the group, is our old friend Claud Mitchel. This indeed is a change. He has learned to handle the cards quite briskly—like any old gamester. At his side stands a man watching him sharply, saying not one word to any one, yet seemingly quite interested in the game. Shortly those players began betting quite heavily. When the betting began Mitchel seemed inclined to quit the game and arose, then turned as if ashamed to leave them and reseated himself, and when the game became very exciting was the coolest of the four. The bets ran high until one man, the dealer, staked ten thousand dollars on his hand.

Claud looked up at the man who was so earnestly watching him at that moment, and the man gave him the wink to bid up. He raised the bid; no one covered it; and soon Claud Mitchel was the winner of that glowing pile of gold.

Then the man at his side spoke to Mitchel.

“Sir, you are wanted; come with me!” he said firmly.

“Not now,” said Mitchel, for the fever of the gambler was full upon him; and any gambler—not at “Monte Carlo” can testify to its wonderful power.

“It must be now,” said the stranger, while he laid his hand on his shoulder and again said : “Come!”

Mitchel reluctantly arose, though years afterwards he could give no reason for his doing so, and followed the man from the room, while the curscs of the men at the table followed them. Those men had played a losing game on purpose to fleece the young man out of his gold; but the stranger understood their motives, gave him time to win, then led him out of their clutches.

After they were clear of the place, the stranger said:

“Young man, go home with me, if you have nothing else to do, and I will tell you why I called you away from that card table,” for he

saw that Mitchel was not in his proper element; and then he had taken an unusual liking to the young man.

“I wish to know why you did that, so I will accept your invitation. But first tell me your name—mine is Mitchel, Claud Mitchel, from York state.”

“Mine is Ross Crieg,” he said. “I have my horses here and we will soon be on our way home, a distance of five miles,” he added as they arrived at a stable, and soon both were seated behind two high bred horses, which Mitchel saw were the pride of their owner.

“Are you seeking work or pleasure?” Crieg asked after they were on their way.

“Traveling for pleasure is my greatest occupation at present,” said Mitchel with a laugh.

“Then, take an old man's advice; and, don't find pleasure at the card table again.”

“Why,” says Mitchell, “that was fun.”

“Yes. But, if I had not called you away, they would have had all your money in another hour.”

“Impossible!” cried Mitchel incredulously.

“They would,” said Crieg, “for they are professional gamblers.”

“If you are right, then how did I win!” he exclaimed, half doubtingly.

“I saw the bait they were holding out; and let you play till I knew they were ready to turn your luck, then I—you know, you came with me,” he said, with a rougish smile.

The scenery took up their attention then until they arrived at Crieg’s house, about two o’clock that bright moonlight morning.

The next day Crieg and Mitchell rode through the former’s vineyards and orange grove; and Mitchel saw much that interested him.

“Why, if you will pardon me for being so inquisitive, did you have your house built on yonder pile of rocks, when you have such a beautiful place here below?” asked Mitchel, after they were nearly ready to ascend to the house.

“I like the ledge best, for sanitary reasons; also for the better view of the surrounding

country," answered Crieg with a smile. "An old man like me," he continued, "with no female around him but an old negress housekeeper, cares not for the opinion of any one but himself. I call my home Crieg's Nest. I think you cannot find a lovelier 'Nest' in California."

"Lovely enough for a queen, Crieg, but where is she?" he asked in a bantering tone, yet half-fearful that he had taken too much liberty.

"Dead," sighed Crieg. "I shall never marry, boy, but you are young—you will some day. What's the matter now?" and he looked so sharply at Mitchel that he replied:

"Crieg, I am already married."

He said it in such a wo-begone style that the man laughed loud and long.

"You married!" he cried, when he could control his risibilities long enough to speak; "Why, you are nothing but a boy!"

"I know it; but, a married man all the same," he said, trying to bring a smile to his face, but failed.



“Now, I will be the inquisitive one. Will you tell me what you meant? You certainly were joking.”

“I was not. I was eighteen last Christmas and married that day, or rather the next morning between five and six——”

“Ah, I see! a runaway match, and repenting at leisure——.”

“Stop!” cried Mitchel hoarsely. “I will tell you my story.”

“You say, you have not seen your wife since a few hours after she became your bride,” said Crieg, rather impatiently, when Claud had finished his story.

“That is what I said. I told you the reason for it.”

“Certainly; but, you forgot one thing—the most essential part to me—the name of the bride,” he said jokingly, not thinking of any interest to himself, only to make Claud talk.

“I did not think it would interest you, a stranger. Her name was Orabelle Belmont.”

Crieg looked at him a moment as though he

thought Mitchel a lunatic; then he asked in a dry, husky voice, the name of the girl's mother.

"Lillie Belmont," answered Mitchel.

Crieg stared at him, opened his lips as though to speak, shut them together again and groaned.

"That is a strange action in a stranger," thought Claud.

"Crieg," said Claud, "you surely could not have known her. What is the matter? Have you ever been east?"

"Have I ever been east! Boy, you know not what you ask or who you are talking to. That Lillie you named was my sister."

"Your sister!" Mitchel fairly shouted, "Then, ye gods and little fishes——"

"Hush! give me your hand, my boy, and shake your old Uncle! Yes, I am your Uncle. You need not look so thunderstruck."

"Why, I cannot believe it," exclaimed Mitchel.

"You will have to. Come with me and I will show you a picture of both my sisters. You will recognize Lillie, I think, although this

was taken before the war," he said, when he placed the picture before his guest, after they arrived at the house.

"Your sister! 'tis a perfect picture of my—little wife," he said, some tenderness sounding in his voice, "yet not a bit like her mother," he added.

Crieg would not hear of Mitchel's leaving for many weeks. But, as the cold weather advanced in the east, Mitchel left for home to prepare for a foreign tour. His prolonged stay with Crieg, had prohibited him from traveling as much as he intended doing when he left his father's house.

Crieg advised him to keep his promise and finish his studies before claiming his child bride.

Before leaving Crieg's Nest, Mitchell placed the money he had won at the card table, in the hands of Crieg, to invest in real estate, to be given to Orabelle on her eighteenth birthday, if Claud did not return before that time.

"Not one word," he said to Crieg, "must she know of this until that day."

## CHAPTER VI.

## CLAUD AND HIS TRAVELS.

How looks "Crieg's Nest" of the "Golden Gate?"

Listen, and I will try and relate.

I have seen it when the gale was most terrific

Along the shore of the grand Pacific ;

When, seemingly, surge after surge of white cap foam

Went rolling close to the rocky dome

Of the "Nest," whose rock points pierce below,

And are lifted and lifted and then let go

By an avalanche of thunder, a blinding deafening ire,

To where they are warmed with a central fire.

You could feel its granite fibres crack,

As if it were ground by a cataract ;

And it seemed to plunge with a shudder and thrill

Right at the breast of that swooping hill,

Till the monster's arms of a sudden drop

From "Crieg's Nest's" rocky tower top,

Silently down into the sea.

MARIE.

SOME days after Claud's return from California, his mother asked him to tell her of his travels and all the events which he thought would interest her. He had little to tell of his journey until he reached San Francisco. He

told her how he came to get into bad company, and how a Mr. Crieg saved him from becoming a gambler; but of the money he won and the disposal thereof, he kept silent.

He had said to Crieg: "Time enough for my parents to know of my sin when I am past minorship; and then I hope to prove it only a youthful folly. It would only worry mother when I go away again, and so I think it best if they do not know of this escapade."

"I will tell you a little of what I saw at Crieg's Nest," he said. "First I will tell of his home and his vineyards. His house was situated on the top of a ledge of rocks, about one hundred feet above the level of the rest of his plantation, on one side—that is, nearly all his land lay below him—like an observatory, overlooking all his wealth. On the other side the ledge extended far away to the sandy beach of the Pacific Ocean. I could sit on his veranda and see, like a panorama before my eyes, his vineyards, spreading out almost as far as the natural eye can see. His houses—mother, it

looked like a small village in the distance, to see his workmen's homes and the buildings needed to complete his manufactory for forming grapes into wine and raisins. These houses are not such grand affairs as we have here, because it would be unnecessary. Mother, just think of it, there they stack their hay and leave it in the fields until wanted. The grain they generally leave in the fields until threshed."

"Crieg said they had but two seasons there, and they called them the wet and the dry seasons. About the middle of October begins the wet season and it ends about April or May. Therefore, from September to May is their time for putting in seed. He told me that one man with a two horse team could put in from two to three hundred acres during seed time. Mother, if we could farm it that way here, every one would become rich."

"Yes, if our cold climate would only allow us such a seed time and harvest."

"Oh, it would not! California is a complete summer land! Mother, you are an enthusias-

tic lover of strawberries. Now just think of raising them every month in the year. Would you like such a summer all the year round?"

"That seems strange," she mused.

"It is the truth, mother. But we are wandering from Crieg's Nest a little. Mr. Crieg had one hundred acres in grapes. He has them made up in wine and raisins. He has his own presses, his men to prepare his raisins; and all these families live on his plantation, for the most of the men are married. He claims his vineyards cost him at the rate of \$125.00 per acre; and now they annually yield him about ten tons of grapes, which find a ready sale at \$20.00 per ton. His orange grove was small. He said he was experimenting with them. He had but five acres and about four hundred and fifty trees. I can say the oranges were the most delicious that I ever put in my mouth," and he smacked his lips as though he could taste them yet, while she cried:

"You have not said one word about flowers!"

"Flowers! Your English ivy there by the

window would grow out of doors all the year round there. I cannot tell you how beautiful the flowers were, but like our summer gardens is the best I can explain, for our most costly and rarest green-house flowers I saw growing there out of doors, and they seemed to give them but little care."

"Mother, I have told you of Mr. Crieg, and now I want you to let your mind wander backwards and tell me if you ever knew anyone else by that name?"

"Yes, I once knew a girl by that name."

He tried not to smile as he asked: "Where did she live?" but the smile would break forth.

"You ought to remember your mother-in-law's name. Surely you knew," his mother replied.

"Did she have any brothers and sisters?" he asked, ignoring his mother's reply.

"She had a sister who married George Grey. She is a widow now and lives in Albany. You know I told you Orabelle was with her aunt, Kate Grey."



“I knew that,” he said impatiently, “but had Mrs. Belmont brothers?”

“Yes, one.”

“What became of him?”

“I do not know, he——”

“Mother!” he cried excitedly, not waiting for her to finish her sentence, “his name is Ross Crieg. He lives in California, and I have been living with my uncle for nearly four months. There, isn’t that a fairy tale?”

“Claud, you are jesting,” she said with a doubtful air.

“No, no!” He shook his head but his eyes twinkled mischievously. “He had pictures and papers which proved to me he was Orabelle’s uncle,” added Claud.

“Did you tell him the stor——” She stopped and stared at Claud.

He waited a moment and as she did not say any more, he said: “If you mean the story of my marriage with his niece, I did tell him all.”

“Did he approve of it?”

“Mother, could you expect him to?”

His mother was silent. His marriage was a topic she did not like to speak of. Sometimes she wished it had never been.

“Well,” continued Claud, “I cannot say he approved of the marriage, but he advised me to finish my studies before I saw her again, just as my father wishes me to do.”

“Did he?”

She is fearful her son is telling her an untruth, but a look into his eyes convinces her he is speaking truthfully.

“He did, and I promised him I would do as my father bade me. Now, mother, I shall be away. I shall be with you until after New Year’s, then leave for Germany. You know I want to go to the south of France and to Italy before I commence my studies again.”

“You want to go and we want you to go, but have you thought how long you will be absent and how lonely we shall be with you gone?”

“Father thinks I will have to take a four years’ course, but I think you will see me back home in three years.”

The twenty-third day of January Claud embarked for Europe. His father had planned which way they should go to New York, and of course it was not by way of Albany. There lived the wife of his son, and if they went so near, he was fearful lest Claud should insist on seeing his child wife again, so he chose the route which took them over the Erie R. R. The weather was unusually fine, so that Claud had a pleasant voyage over the briny deep.

He had arrived at Paris before he sat down to write a letter to his anxious mother. He told her how he had visited the home of the Hugos, while in a later letter he wrote that "Night Scenes in Paris" as descriptions of the city, did not lie one bit. He found nearly everything as described therein.

"But, mother," he wrote one day when he had been absent nearly a year, "I feel as though I must come home to my wife. You write me no word concerning her, yet I have thought of her almost constantly; and I am beginning to love that little pale faced girl who

became my wife so long ago. I am older now, and I think I have wronged that child very much. I intend to finish my studies by another June and come home to claim my waiting bride. You may tell her so when you write to her. Mother, please send me her picture! I do not know why I ask it, only I feel that I cannot stay here without a picture of my little wife."

This letter caused his parents much concern. His father wrote him that if he came before he had fully completed his course, he should be very much displeased with him. If he came before Orabelle finished her education, then both their lives would be a failure.

Claud had told his story to his chum at the university. This young man had said: "No father would have kept me from seeing my wife and bidding her good-bye! Why, you might have loved her dearly if you had seen her again. One year, sometimes, makes a little girl a woman. A lovely woman, too, may have been a plain child."

Claud felt ashamed of his conduct. It began

to look so different when Dr. Glynn talked to him so strongly.

“Why,” said Glynn, “did you marry that child, if you were going to leave her so soon? Think of her position—a wife and yet not a wife. What must be her thoughts of you? You say you left and then refrained from corresponding with her. Why was this?”

“My father requested me not to write——”

“Bah!” Had you no mind?” he interrupted in a disgusted tone.

“You take me for an idiot, do you?” angrily asked Claud, as he sprang quickly to the other’s side.

“Claud, you do not understand me,” he said with a peculiar smile. “Sit down! I wish you could see your conduct in the way it looks to me. You and your parents have broken one of the most sacred commands of the bible.”

“That is pretty strong language to me, doctor. I would knock any other man down if he should say that to my face.”

“Have you not read many times that com-

mand, 'What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder'?"

"Oh, yes," he answered in a relieved tone, "but we have not broken it."

"I say you have, in a measure. But come, we must not quarrel. Go home and atone for nearly two years of neglect."

"No, I have given my word to my father, and——"

"You will abide by it even should your life be one of misery; and her's too."

"Stop!"

Claud was so angry that he could hardly restrain his fighting propensities. The other laughed at him a moment, then turned and left the room.

This conversation took place one Sunday in November, the first year of Claud's university days.

## CHAPTER VII.

A CLOUD NO LARGER THAN A MAN'S HAND.

“Will gold bring back his cheerful voice,  
That used to win my heart from sorrow?  
Will silver warm the frozen blood,  
Or make my heart less lone to-morrow?”

MONA'S WATERS.

LET us look backward a moment at those three men we left in the Laurel Hotel, San Francisco, and listen to their conversation. For a time angry exclamations, curses and oaths were all they could utter. Then Baylis, the dealer, who lost the money, arose, threw down his cards with a spiteful action, and said to Charles Hill, with a horrid oath: “I'll have revenge on Crieg yet, for leading that tender-foot away from us!”

“He is too rich for you to swear revenge against,” said Hill. “What can you do? You cannot get our money back.”

“I do not expect to gain the money, but in some way, some time, be it ten years hence, I will make that man suffer!” he hissed.

"You best let that job out, Baylis," said Lee Haywood, who completed the trio.

"By the — I will have my revenge I tell you, if I work ten years (hic) to consummate my task. I can't say what it shall be, but revenge I will have," he hissed through his teeth.

"I am mad (hic) as you are, and if you want my help in (hic) your dirty work (hic) let me know," said Hill.

"If I can work out my revenge alone, I shall not call on (hic) you, you d—— dirty black-guard of a——"

He said no more, for the fist of Hill landed on his jaw, felling him to the floor. The three were a little the worse for liquor, and therefore a brawl was the result. The proprietor, after a short time, succeeded in quelling the disturbance. Baylis being the worst of the three, was placed in a bed to sleep off the effects of his debauch.

Baylis was a tall, slim fellow, with light brown hair, that hung in little ringlets in spite



of comb or brush. When he was in New York he was a flashily dressed young man, whom every flighty young girl fell in love with, providing he was in the mood for a flirtation and tried to gain their love. It almost seemed as though no one could resist his overtures of friendship, for man, woman or child who came in contact with him, loved William Baylis; for he was oily tongued, friendly mannered and gentlemanly in appearance. Thus it was, that no one in the social realm would have taken him for a gambler and a rogue. But in the abode of the gambler, he was a different man. By some persons liquor was thought to make the difference. Sullen, morose, revengeful if crossed, using the weapons nearest at hand if he thought his honor was questioned, yet he had never committed murder.

Honor among gamblers is said to be like honor among thieves.

Haywood was a complete picture of the character "George Harris" in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Hill would be a first class character for "Legree." He had just that look and action when walking, that would cause one who had seen the play of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to exclaim: "There goes Legree!"

After these three became sober, they looked for "pastures new and rich with verdure," and found another "tenderfoot" as they called him, and played the same game on him that they tried to play on Claud Mitchel. This time no Ross Crieg stood by to save their victim, and they won the pile.

"Now," said Baylis the next day, "I'm for east. My sister has written me to come home, and I believe I'll go."

"I would like to go east once more," said Haywood.

"Well, go with me. I can show you some sights there, I guess."

"I'll think of it. When do you go?" asked Haywood.

"Oh, to-day is Friday?" asked Baylis.

"Yes," answered Haywood and Hill.

“Then I think I’ll start about next Wednesday.”

“I’ll be with you,” said Haywood.

“Hill,” cried Baylis, “what in h—— makes you so glum? Look at him, Hay——”

“It’s none of your d—— biz!” ejaculated Hill. “Just you two shake me if you dare,” and he shook his fist under Baylis’ nose.

“Who’s talking of shaking you? I can shake you in a hurry if you want it,” and he began to divest himself of his coat, ready for a fight.

“Baylis, don’t be a fool,” said Haywood.

Baylis turned to Haywood with an evil light in his eye, but changed his mind and said: “Come, have a drink and another game, then we will be all right.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The next time Baylis comes to our view, he is walking down Broadway, New York, one fine moonlight evening in October, talking earnestly with another man. Would you know that swell? No, you would not think it possible, yet that is William Baylis. He has been home

but a short time, yet he is planning a scheme with his companion, Lee Haywood, how to get a large sum of money into their control.

Hill, their confederate, has written them of Crieg's purchase of a tract of land, and of his wanting an overseer.

Baylis thought this a fine chance to commence working out his revenge, so wrote to Hill to make application, through some one else, for the position for Haywood. He thought if one of the trio could get it, that in time they could pocket part of the funds. But a better revenge was almost under his eyes, yet he saw it not, for it was only a mist like a veil that hung between him and his revenge.

Haywood secured the position and left for the land of gold, but not till after he had fallen in love with Baylis's sister Lucy. This did not please Baylis, for he loved his sister, and thought the life his friend lived would never make him a good husband. He thought it was a blessing when Haywood returned to the west.

Lucy Baylis was fair. She had blue eyes,

brown hair that lay in pretty waves, natural curls on her high forehead. She was a bright, intellectual young lady. She had one of the loveliest dispositions a maid ever possessed.

She loved her brother dearly, for to her he was good and kind, and when her friend Jennie North came to visit her, about the time her brother came home that fall, she said to herself:

“ I wish those two might love each other. I will not try to make them, but I hope they will grant my wish.”

She was thinking this when her brother came into the room.

“ Well puss, what solemn problem are you trying to solve now?” he asked, as he noticed the knitted brow and puzzled expression on her face.

She turned to meet him and a merry look came into her eyes as she wound her arm around his neck and put up her face for a kiss. After receiving his salutation she said:

“ Will, am I ever to have a brother's wife?”

“ Lucy! I will answer you by asking when I am to have a brother?”

“Hush! I have never seen the man yet that I could call my lord and master.”

“Hush, sister!” he exclaimed, laughing at her indignant look.

“No, Will, I have no wish to marry. The men profess to love the lady, marry her, then where is their love is gone?” she said firmly, yet half mockingly.

“I have never seen a woman yet that I wanted to marry,” he slowly said, as he turned to the window and gazed into the street.

“Will, you talk finely. How about those many love affairs here and the ones you have written about?”

“Lucy, those were not love but flirtations. I never saw my ideal yet.”

“When you see her, let me know,” she said, and hurried from the room.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Lucy Baylis, where are you?” called Jennie North at the door of a sleeping apartment on the third floor of a brown stone house, the Baylis’ mansion on Fifth avenue, New York,

about two months after the return of Lucy's brother.

"I am here," she answered, "come in. I guess you can see to find a chair."

"Lucy, I have come to tell you that I must go home next week Tuesday," said Miss North, as soon as she was seated.

"Oh, no, not before New Year's."

"Yes! I am to be married on New Year's day."

"Married! To whom?"

"His name is William Baylis, you ——" and she broke into a merry laugh.

"Oh, Jennie, I am so glad! I did wish for this so much," she said in a happy voice.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CHILD WIFE.

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

**M**RS. Grey found her niece a very peculiar child when she had become acquainted

with her. A girl of fourteen and about four feet tall; lovely chestnut brown hair, that hung below her waist when unbraided; brown eyes, rather large, but bright and flashing. "Not pretty," as nearly every one said in those days. Her cheeks were very pale, except in the center of each, a bright red spot. A very pretty mouth and rosy lips redeemed the plainness of the face or she would have been called homely.

Mrs. Grey said many times that she did not see where Orabelle got her plain looks from, or her retiring disposition.

A more bashful girl would be hard to find. At school, she seldom mixed in the girlish sports of the pupils. She paid strict attention to every study, and at the end of six months stood at the head of her class.

At the age of fifteen, she had advanced so rapidly that she was in the classes of those older than herself by some four and five years. Professor Norton remonstrated with her for doing so much school work in one year.



“But,” said she with a very serious air and a pretty smile, “I must get through with my books and music in five years.”

“There is no must about it,” he said.

“Yes there is, Mr. Norton. You know I must be fit to grace the home of a wealthy man when I am twenty,” she said, and to him a peculiar smile passed her lips while he laughed at her.

Mrs. Grey had requested Orabelle to keep her marriage a secret until her husband came to claim her. She thought it would be for the best as Orabelle was to attend school. She was known as Orabelle Mitchel, for child as she was, she would be called by her husband's name. Many a young man tried to gain her friendship, but she would not accept the friendship of any. When her aunt scolded her for being so foolish, she looked at the woman very much surprised and said:

“You call me foolish when I refuse the company of men. Your advice now is somewhat different from a year ago. Then you said I

must do all in my power to be a true wife, even though I was supposed to be a young girl."

"Wife," she sneered, "I would not call myself a wife if I were you! If you are a wife, where is your husband?"

"Auntie, you are cruel! You call me a child—I am fifteen you know," and she drew herself up straight with a very proud air.

"That is aged, I am sure," her aunt sneered. "You are nothing but a child in looks or stature. Oh, why did my sister cause this terrible curse to fall on you?" and she wrung her hands in agony.

"Curse! Auntie, 'tis no curse. I was a little girl one year ago; to-night I feel I am a woman, and one who will yet prove to you that she can keep her marriage vow to the very letter. You may blame my mother, but she was not the only one to blame. She thought to leave my future provided for and some chance of my having an education. Aunt, if I hurt your feelings by what I shall say now, I beg your pardon, but this I believe; if you had

answered that last letter of mother's, I should not be a married woman this night. Are you not to blame a little?"

"Oh, this is too much," the woman cried as she walked back and forth across the room, wringing her hands.

"Auntie, I am sorry; but you blamed my dead mother, and that I could not bear. Now, Auntie, let us dismiss this distasteful subject. I am married and there is no help for it now. I will try and live as I think is right for a wife."

"Child, you have a cruel wrong to bear. People think you a strange girl not to enjoy young men's company as other girls do. Can't you go and do as other girls do? They do not know here that you are married."

"Auntie, you and I know!"

"True, but that makes no difference."

"Yes it does. I have not willingly committed sin yet, and that I hold would be a sin. Supposing I allowed a young man to escort me to parties and places of amusement for some

time. Then he should visit me and offer me his hand in marriage. I could not accept him be he ever so worthy. I should have to tell him I was what I detest, yes; despise above all things, a married flirt."

"Child, you are using rather strong language!"

"Not any too strong, Auntie. I told you I had awoke. I am no child now."

"If that is your sentiment, I am sorry we kept your marriage secret."

"So have I been sorry, more times than I can count on my fingers!"

Her aunt arose from the window, saying: "Child, say no more, for here comes Nellie Newton. Have you ever hinted to her you were a wife?"

"No. But, this day she shall know."

"No, no!" she cried out in fear.

"Yes, Aunt, I shall tell her, then I will beg her not to tell others for some time to come. Hark! there's the bell. I will go to meet Nellie."

These girls were the best of friends. The only shadow between them was Orabelle's refusal of young men's company.

A few of the young people had planned a trip to Cooperstown to see the lake that Fenimore Cooper had told so much about in his "Leatherstocking Tales," and to-day Nellie Newton had come to see if Orabelle was ready for the trip.

"I am ready," she said in answer to Nellie's question; "I know I should enjoy seeing that rand old lake, but I don't think I ought to go."

"Why not! You seemed to be more anxious to go than I, yet now you say you ought not to go. What do you mean?"

"I will tell you, then you shall say if I go or stay."

"I feel so sorry for you," said Nellie as Orabelle finished her story. "I think you are right, to live as you have, yet I never dreamed of that as the reason for your being so reticent and so unsocial."

"Shall I go with you or stay at home, Nellie?" she asked in a tone of distress.

"Go, by all means! You must not be deprived of all pleasure, little wife!"

"Nellie!" she cried hoarsely, "do not call me that!"

"Why! you are so little I could not help it," she said with a laugh.

"That was what my husband called me. I cannot have anyone else say it. It brings back my wedding morn too plainly with all its sorrow," slowly said Orabelle.

"He left you then, you said, and you have not seen him since?"

"That is what I said."

"Yet he was home last year, through July; I should have thought he would come to see you then."

"You know Auntie and I went to Long Branch as soon as school closed last year?"

"What of that? He might have come there?"

"Yes—s," she said, hesitatingly, "but I suppose he thought of me as a little child, and he would not bother with me."

"You will not always be a child," she ex-

claimed. "Come here! you are growing taller I know. Let us measure once more!"

The girls laughed at their attempts to learn their height, but they soon found that Orabelle was two inches taller than a year before.

The next morning a happy party of twelve young men and thirteen young ladies, met at the Albany station for a trip to "Otsego Lake" arriving at Cooperstown at sunset, a tired yet happy group. After tea they could not resist the temptation to see the lake by moonlight. Only one of their party had been to the lake before, Norton, the professor of History. He had been telling his class of the beautiful scenery one day near to the close of the term, when Otsego lake and surroundings had been the theme of their lesson; and the class had proposed to pass two weeks of their vacation by the side of this lake.

It is a beautiful sight to stand on the dock and watch the steamers float down the lake on a bright moonlight night. This party of young men and maidens were delighted that night

with the view which met their tired eyes. Then they passed back to their temporary home, the "Cooper House."

(The Cooper house was burned in 1891, and nothing is left but the basement walls, crumbling to decay.)

"Where shall we go first, Mr. Norton?" asked Susie Sprague, the next morning, when their company had gathered on the porch, ready for a tour of the town.

"I propose we take a ride on old Natta Bumpo around the lake, first," answered Norton.

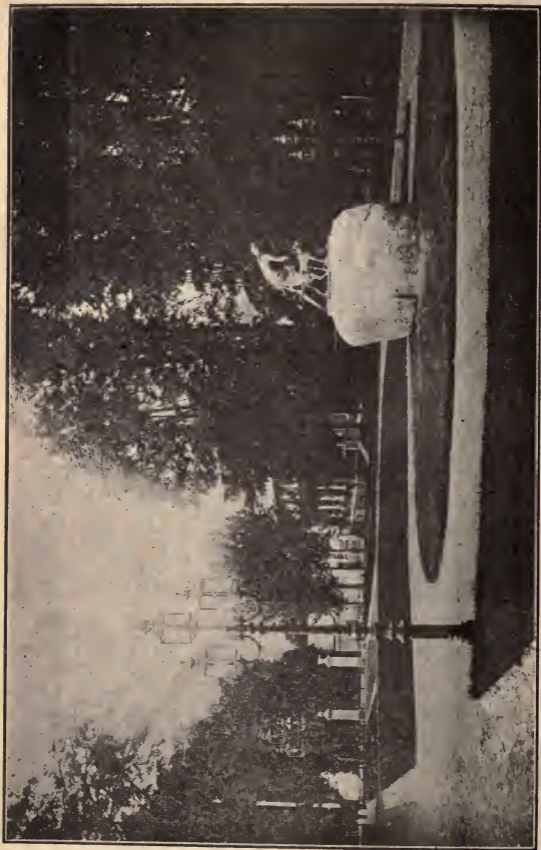
(In the summer of 1898, "Natta Bumppo" took its last trip.)

Soon they were seated on the upper deck of that old boat, slowly floating over the glassy waters of the lake, while Norton pointed out the places supposed to be the ones described by Cooper in his "Leatherstocking Tales."

"I do not wonder Cooper called this lake 'old Glimmer Glass,' do you?" said Orabelle, when they were about half the distance up the lake, which is nine miles long.







VIEW OF PARK

“I do not,” said Nellie Newton; “It seems to me that I can see that floating home of Cooper fame even now.”

— “In your mind’s eye, you mean?” said Norton quickly.

“Certainly,” she answered, with a roguish smile.

They returned in time for dinner, after which they went to the Episcopal cemetery and saw where Cooper sleeps his last sleep. On their way home they passed the spot where Otsego Hall, the Cooper home, used to stand.

(Now that sacred place has been bought by Mrs. Alfred Corning Clarke, of Cooperstown.)

The site of the old mansion is marked by a huge boulder, which forms a pedestal for an Indian and his dog, in bronze; by its side is a marker, in bronze, bearing this inscription:

On this site stood  
Otsego Hall,  
Built by William Cooper,  
The founder of Cooperstown, in 1798.  
The home of  
James Fenimore Cooper,

Where he lived from 1834  
to the day of his death,  
September 14th, 1851.  
Destroyed by fire in 1853.

Supposed to mark the exact spot where old Otsego Hall opened its hospitable doors to the public long years ago. This large park, surrounding the memorial, is kept in perfect condition by the loving care of its owner, who opened its gates to the public in 1898.

Across the lake in Lakewood cemetery, there stands a memorial monument to James Fenimore Cooper; on the top of this memorial is a lifelike statue of a man, in his hand a gun, and by his side is crouched his faithful hound.

“ My glance took in an obelisk,  
High towering near the solemn wood,  
Where Natta Bumppo's stalwart form  
In lifeless grandeur stood.  
Careless his hand the rifle grasp'd,  
That weapon known throughout the world;  
And crouching at the hunter's feet,  
His faithful hound was curl'd.”

VIEW OF COOPER GRAVE





## CHAPTER IX.

## HOME AGAIN.

“At this fair lakelet’s southern bound,  
A famous village may be found;  
Known to the world of fiction wide,  
As Templeton,—Otsego’s pride;—  
Is, from its founder, Cooperstown.

PITCHER.

HOME again, Aunt Kate!” sang Orabelle as she walked into her aunt’s room, just two weeks from the day she left it to go to Cooperstown.

“Did you have a good time?” asked her aunt, after they had conversed some time about home matters.

“Good time! We had a delightful time. I do not wonder people like that famous resort. I do not wonder that Cooper had so much to say in his novels about that lake, for in the sunlight it sparkles and glimmers and sparkles like unto diamonds. I cannot begin to tell you half of

the beauties of Otsego lake and its surroundings. You must go there and see them to half know their wonders."

"Tell me of them," said her aunt.

"It seemed to me, as I stood on some of those places named in the 'Leatherstocking Tales,' that I was in some enchanted palace," Orabelle said. "I know that I was foolish, but that is the way I felt, as though those grounds were sacred."

She left the room a moment and returned with her hand filled with cards and papers.

"Here Aunt," she said, "are some pictures I secured and some pencil sketches, also, of some of the scenes I saw in Cooperstown. This," she said picking out one of the cards, "is a bird's eye view of Cooperstown taken from the east side of the lake looking southward. You can see the dome of the court house, there on the right; that building on the left is the children's home. You see several church spires; those are the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Universalist, Episcopal and Catho-



lic churches. Down there is the boat landing, where we took the boat, the old-time 'Natta Bumpo,' which stands at the dock, you see," pointing to the picture, "for our first ride on old Otsego lake."

"A pretty place, I judge," her aunt mused as Orabelle paused.

"Pretty place is hardly the name, Aunt; yet I can not give it a better one."

"Aunt Kate," said Orabelle, handing a sheet of paper to her aunt, "here are a few verses that Nellie wrote that morning we took our first ride on the lake."

"Read them," said Mrs. Grey, handing the paper back, and Orabelle read the following:

"Once on a time, as the story books say,  
I hastened away on a summer's day,  
To Cooperstown, to glean from Nature,  
Some beautiful thoughts for she is our best teacher.

Thus far away from my home I wandered,  
And there I sat me down and pondered,  
As upon a steamboat I my first ride did take  
Over the sparkling waters of Otsego Lake.

## FIRST WED, THEN WON.

Now, Cooper's tales have told us all about  
This lake as a famous water route;  
And this old baat after one of his characters named,  
I'm sure is nearly world-wide famed.

'Old Glimmer Glass' is a bed of diamonds, to-day,  
As the golden sun shines on its water way;  
And many mortals on the breast of its waves,  
Are enjoying the rest that a weary one craves.

We are sailing over its waters with hearts so gay,  
And listening to the murmuring waves as they play  
Beneath the boat, in their haste to reach,  
The near-by shore and the gravelly beach.

We have left 'King Fisher's Tower' far behind,  
While before us the 'sunken island' is outlined.  
Ah! here we turn and are nearing the west side;  
A little farther down, then comes the end of our ride;

We pass so many historical points as we float,  
Down this beautiful lake in our 'Natta' boat,  
To its landing dock; with many a regret  
That time is so short, yet the day, we'll never forget.

We're nearing the dock! other places our attention  
claim,  
That bear full as much interest and fame  
As this finest of scenery, and glorious sight  
Of the glimmering lake in the golden sunlight."

After reading the verses she picked up a card,  
saying: "This is a picture of the tower Nellie  
referred to."



KING FISHER TOWER







VIEW OF THE OLD MEMORIAL

"I should think it a pleasant place. Is it private property?" her aunt asked, still gazing at the picture.

"Yes; it belongs to the Clarke's, and stands near the east shore, about two miles up the lake. This is three-mile point on the west side of the lake; a place convenient for picnic parties. This is five-mile point, which is on the west side and very much like the other, only larger. The hotel is large and serves its summer guests with the best of accommodations."

"This is the memorial to Fenimore Cooper in Lakewood cemetery, across the lake from Cooperstown."

When her aunt laid that down, she handed another, saying: "This is Cooper's grave in the Episcopal cemetery. Aunt, I wish you could see the real spot instead of this picture," she said as she handed the next picture to her aunt, "this is where the old Cooper home used to stand, called 'Otsego Hall.' Now, nothing is there but a stone tablet inscribed in memorium of the Hall. I might call it a memorial stone.

This is fenced in and flowers grow around it, just in the center of Fair street."

Her aunt had kept silent, for the descriptions and pictures interested her very much; but when Orabelle picked another paper and sat smiling at it; and did not offer it to her, she watched her a moment in silence then said:

"What ails that picture that you are afraid I shall see it?"

"Nothing, only I was thinking of the time when I saw the original," she answered.

"Let me see it! what is there so funny about it?"

She took the paper. Gazed at it a moment; and she could not repress her smile, as she said:

"This is a cute looking boy; is it a true picture?"

"As true as could be drawn from memory. Let me tell you about that. One bright, sunshiny day, we started at the outlet of the lake, Susquehanna river, and wandered down its banks for about three miles. About a mile from the lake we came upon the laziest specimen







OUR LAZY BOY

of a boy I ever saw. That," she said, pointing to the picture in her aunt's hand, "is a pencil sketch of him. Our party artist, Mills, drew this as near like him as he could remember, some three days afterwards, while we were talking and laughing about him; and Mills gave this to me. We named it, you see, 'Our Lazy Boy'."

Her aunt was still silent so she continued:

"Mr. Norton asked the boy why he did not use his umbrella which lay on the bank at his feet, and keep off the sun, if he was not going to fish. The boy gave him a wild look, winked one eye, sort of knowingly and said he 'did not know as he needed it.' All of us laughed heartily and the boy looked hurt. We tried to hire his reel and other fishing tackle, but he would not let us have it. Some four hours afterwards, we saw him sitting on the bank of the river, as you can see in the picture, and Mr. Norton asked: 'What luck?' The boy told him to 'go west and grow up with the country.' Aunt, I do not think that boy had baited his fish hook that day, for the line was dry and

looked as though it had not been used or even undone."

Mrs. Grey looked up from the picture and reprovingly said: "I am thinking you young people were rude to that boy. I am sorry if you helped to make him feel unpleasant."

"Now Aunt! judging from that picture, do you think he knew we were laughing at him!" she slowly asked, yet a smile of derision passed over her face.

"Yes, I do; yet we should be very careful never to cause sorrow to people of little wit. I think from the little you have told me and from the picture that you could not call that boy an idiot."

"No, I think he was more lazy than idiotic."

"Then think of how you young people, being so thoughtless, must have hurt his feelings. Do not allow yourself to make such unmannerly fun again," said Mrs. Grey, chidingly.

"I will try and remember your advice, Aunt," she said, then gathered up her views and left the room.

A few weeks after Orabelle returned to Albany she received a letter from New York. After reading its contents she took it to her Aunt and said: "Auntie you remember Lucy Baylis, we met at Long Branch last season?"

"Oh, yes, I remember her. Why do you speak of her now?"

"I have corresponded with her all this year, and this letter asks me to spend Thanksgiving with her. She says Jennie North will be there at that time. May I go?"

"I presume you can, yet it is a long time ahead," she said, thoughtfully.

Then Orabelle, after her aunt handed back the letter, put it in her pocket; and took up an old book, a diary, which she had placed in her lap. She opened it, turned to a certain page, pointed to some writing and placed it in her aunt's lap, saying: "Auntie, read that."

Mrs. Grey read the few words penciled there, then looked up and said: "Well, what of that!"

"Was that your brother?"

"Yes, my only brother."

“Have you heard from him since he went to California?”

“No. I have tried to, but could learn no tidings whatsoever concerning him.”

“Why did he go off there, so far from home and friends?”

“I will tell you. He loved a beautiful girl in those days, sixteen years ago. She died just six days before the day set for their marriage. Ross stayed home nearly three months after her death; then he said this part of the world would see him no more, packed his trunk and started for California. He was completely heart-broken.”

“I have heard mamma speak of Uncle Ross many a time, while she was sick,” softly mused Orabelle.

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## CHAPTER X.

## NEW FRIENDS.

“ Oh, never sit we down, and say  
There's nothing left but sorrow!  
We'll sow the golden grain to-day,  
And harvest comes to-morrow.  
Build up heroic lives, and all  
Be like a sheathen sabre,  
Ready to flash out at God's call,  
O chivalry of labor!

GERALD MASSEY.”

WHEN Thanksgiving day came, in the fall of 1885, it found Orabelle Mitchel, Jennie North, Nellie and Fred Newton in New York, at the home of Lucy Baylis. Lucy Baylis was twenty-two or three years of age; lived with a maiden aunt, who chaperoned her, and gave Lucy's brother a home when he would stay there.

Orabelle and Lucy stole away from the rest of the visitors to the room of Lucy for a chat that Thanksgiving afternoon. Orabelle was anxious to learn the reason of the delayed marriage of Jennie North.

“Will you tell me,” said Orabelle, “the reason Jennie and your brother were not married last New Years, as you wrote me they would be?”

“I cannot tell you, dear friend, as I would did I but know the reason myself,” answered Lucy sadly.

“You do not mean to tell me that you do not know!”

“That is it. I do not know the reason; yet my brother received a dispatch the day before Christmas, which he said called him to San Francisco; and that he must leave at once.”

“Do you know what was in the message!”

“No, I never asked him. I supposed it was something wrong at his ranch that needed his immediate attention, for he left the next day.”

“Owns a ranch, does he?”

“Yes, I have asked him to describe it, but he says it is like all western ranches we read about, and that is all I know.”

“Certainly, Lucy, you could not know if I told you,” said a voice in the doorway, inter-



rupting her suddenly, for she supposed them selves alone.

No, William Baylis, do not lie to that pure sister, and call Crieg's new property yours!

"Oh! When did you get home, Will?" asked Lucy, as she arose to greet him.

"Just now, sister. As you have a friend here, excuse me while I go and remove the signs of my long journey."

"Wait a moment!" cried Lucy, as he turned to leave the door.

He turned back and came into the room. "What is it, sister?" he asked, but gave the stranger an admiring glance.

"Orabelle, this is my brother Will. Miss Mitchel, Mr. Baylis," said Lucy.

Again was William Baylis the New York swell.

He bowed low over her hand when he gathered it within his own. For a moment he held that hand with a hearty clasp. She thought he held it longer than courtesy called for, and tried to gently draw her fingers from his clasp, while

he passed the compliments of the day with her. Soon after this came the summons to dinner and Baylis offered his arm to Orabelle. She, with a peculiar smile on her lips, turned quickly and placed her arm within that of Lucy saying:

“Thank you, sir, for your kindness, but here is my escort for dinner to-day.”

He bit his lips beneath his mustache, then gave a droll laugh at his discomfiture. He made a mental vow at that moment, that he would bring that girl to his feet to plead for mercy, before he was many years older. Dinner passed quite pleasantly; but, William Baylis had found one girl who did not like flattery, and who would not receive his advances. This piqued him. It was something he was not used to. “Girls” he thought, “liked flattery.”

During the evening when Orabelle, Nellie and Fred Newton sang a trio, Baylis watched Orabelle every moment with a fascinated look on his face. His sister was alarmed. “Can it be that I have invited Orabelle here, to step in between Jennie and Will?” she asked herself.

“Will,” his sister said; her voice assuming a strange tone on the “Will,” as the song came to an end; “Will, are you dreaming?”

“No,” he said as he turned towards her with a smile, “but that song is grand. Miss Mitchel, if that is one of your favorites,” he went to the piano as he spoke, “please sing another as fine as that!”

His tones were very pleading. She did not act as though she heard him. Jennie North called for the “Gipsy Queen,” and Orabelle sang that, then refused to sing again, after she caught a glimpse of the face of Baylis beside her. She gave one glance at Baylis when she sang, and the look of admiration she saw on his face gave her a feeling of disgust. Though but sixteen, she had learned to read the different phases and facial expressions of those she met; and when she saw admiration in Baylis’s eyes, it gave her a shock as well as disgusted her. Love was far from her thoughts in those days, except that little spark that belonged to an absent husband, whom she was beginning to think

of daily. It has been truly said "that distance lends enchantment."

We will take a trip to California, while Baylis is in New York, and see if we can find out why he left so suddenly last winter, so near his wedding day that the wedding was postponed. We will go first to the new farm of Crieg's, and listen to a conversation there.

"Hill, did you send that telegram to Baylis, as I told you?" asked Lee Haywood.

"Yes; and he will return just as quickly as he can get here."

"That is good. I do not think I can follow his plans, unless he is here to direct. Then I do not like this business any too well for I have learned to like Crieg; and if I can get out of Baylis's clutches I shall live a different life."

The loud laugh of Hill made him pause.

"Would you be a traitor, Haywood?"

"No, but, I am sorry I have put myself in his power, and just as soon as I can withdraw, honorably I shall."

"Good morning, Haywood; how is every-

thing to-day," Ross Crieg interrupted, as he walked into the room.

A look of fear passed between the men at Crieg's words, while they wondered how much of their conversation he had overheard.

"Everything going finely," answered Haywood.

Haywood introduced Hill as a friend from the east; for Haywood had pretended his home was in New York.

Crieg was a man not easily deceived; yet, he had been fooled in this instance by Haywood; but when he received an introduction to Hill, it came to him where he had seen the two men in the past. He said nothing to them at the time of this remembrance; but hurriedly finished his business at the farm, then as quickly as he could hastened home. When there he sat down and tried to solve the problem of why Haywood the gambler should become his overseer. He finally became convinced that there was some chicanery in the transaction, and hurried to his confidential secretary Dow and consulted him.

As a result of this interview, Neil Dow was given an office in the home of the overseer and called the bookkeeper. In reality he was Crieg's private detective. Crieg did not believe in discharging a good man until he found him guilty, although his suspicions had been aroused.

When Baylis arrived this change had been made, and he blamed Haywood for having Hill there and giving Crieg even a chance of seeing the man.

"But I do not see how that made any difference, Baylis. Crieg said he had been looking for a bookkeeper, all along," said Haywood.

"That may be. But it spoils my chance for revenge, as the books can't be tampered with at present. Lay low and bide your time; perhaps he may, if you play your cards right, become so infatuated with you that he will allow you to become bookkeeper as well as overseer. See!"

"Yes; and I will work for that position, too, but not because you wish me to," he said with an air which alarmed Baylis.

“What do you mean, Haywood?”

“This; I am tired of my bondage to you and I will break it from this moment!”

“Like the d——l you will.”

“I have made up my mind and it will take more than you to change it, Baylis.”

“Haywood, you are crazy!”

“No, I am perfectly sane now.”

“Then this is what Hill meant. He said I must look out for you were a traitor.”

“Call me what you will, Baylis, I will never prove a traitor to Ross Crieg. Then this is not all; since I left your home, the bright eyes of your sister have followed me, until I have resolved to become such a man as would not blush to ask that lovely girl to be his bride.”

“Whew! how wonderfully nice we are all at once,” sneered Baylis.

“No, not at all at once,” he answered slowly.

“Now, hear me, Lee Haywood! I have waited months since my return from New York, to get speech with you; and you have avoided me, for you thought I dare not come here; but you

see I have dared. Hill has tried to see you and tell you my wishes, for I was angry, and you cut with him too. Now, just see what you have done. Through your means, I was here instead of at New York last New Years, which was to have been my wedding day, and which was postponed on account of the telegram from Hill. Yet, when I got here, you shook the business. Let me tell you this, now," as Haywood attempted to speak, "you will never marry my sister, for I shall see her and give her your history; and she is too pure minded to marry the likes of you."

"Pity her brother wasn't more like her," interrupted Haywood, "and what a blessing to the girl out east, when that wedding was postponed. How you must have loved her, to forget your wedding day for the pleasant task of fulfilling your vow of vengeance! I thank God that I am able to foil you in this one instance."

Neither had seen the approach of Crieg, or heard him step on the doorstep, where his feet refused to carry him any farther, because his



name had been used by a voice that did not belong to the overseer; so he had listened until he thought it was time to make his presence known; but the next sentence made him wait a moment longer.

“Lee Haywood, you dare to foil me in my revenge upon Ross Crieg, and you shall pay the penalty by death,” he hissed.

“Go on; do and say as you will, I shall never touch a penny of Crieg’s money, which is not lawfully mine!”

“You dare me ——”

“Well, Gentlemen,” interrupted Crieg at that moment, “I am sorry I have to disturb you, I have some work I wish Haywood to advise me about. As I intend to start for the east in two days, my time is limited.

This compelled Baylis to leave with his wrath at boiling point, for he knew by the look on Crieg’s face that his revenge had failed. He went away muttering, and when partly concealed by some low shrubs, shook his fist at the house and vowed again for vengeance. Crieg

went with Haywood to see the work he had named, then he asked for an explanation of the conversation he had overheard.

“Crieg,” said Haywood, when he had told all the past history, “do you think a man of my sinfulness can atone enough to be received by his fellows, and taken by the hand like an honest man?”

“He that repents of sin and sins no more, shall receive forgiveness,” Crieg made answer.

“Crieg, I do not fear Baylis’s vengeance for myself, but for you. As for turning his sister’s like or dislikes, I think it impossible, for he dare not tell her of me unless he tells of himself. Then she must have got my letter by this time and knows my life as well as you, for I have concealed nothing but her brother’s part.”

“Haywood, we will watch Baylis closely and try and foil him at every point. Give me the address of Baylis’s sister, and perhaps—I may meet her while I am in the east. Remember one thing, from this day I am your friend, here is my hand.”

Haywood gave him a hearty grasp and mentally swore a faithful allegiance to his first real friend; for nearly a year's work for Crieg had convinced him that when Crieg said "friend" he meant it, and a true friend too.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### BAYLIS BUYS AN OLD MINE.

"Oh, for a wonderful gold mine, well drilled,  
That these pockets of mine might be filled,"  
Sang a little ragged and laughing urchin.      LIFE.

"Hill, I want you to go up among the old mines and see if there are any old claims and houses for sale."

"Baylis are you going to turn miner?"

"Do my bidding and ask no questions," impatiently; "I want the cheapest one you can buy. If the house has four rooms in it will suit me; and the farther from all other huts, the better to my purpose,"

“ Did your marriage come off this time, that you are after a cage for the bird? ”

“ Out with you, ” he fairly shouted, as he swung his fist under Hill’s nose, “ do my errand and quick too! ”

“ Come, come, Baylis, you are too cranky! if you go east any more, I shall not know you, for you change so, ”

“ Mind your own biz, ” and he turned on his heel and left the room, Any reference to his betrothal angered him for he did not love Jennie North. At the time he asked Jennie to marry him he was heart whole. But, he saw she loved him, and he thought that the girl was lovely and sole heiress to a million, that it would be for his interest to win her for his bride. But when love did enter his fickle heart, all thoughts of marriage to Jennie North fled.

Hill returned on the fourth day and gave Baylis a description of an abandoned mine, which he had learned could be bought at nearly their own price.

(History of the gold fever of 1848 and years afterwards shows that many mines were abandoned for what the miners supposed were richer mines in Colorado. Some of these mines were never reopened.)

Baylis bought this mine; repaired the house and furnished it. He established himself there and hired men to work the mine. The men thought him crazy, but for this he did not care. They received their wages every Saturday night so they cared little about him or if they found gold or not, until several months had passed, when one of the men exclaimed:

“Boys, look at that ivy! I am going to pull it up and carry it to the house and set it out by the door.”

“Bother the ivy! dig for gold is better,” said Grey the foreman, a little impatiently and rather sarcastically.

Before the foreman had finished speaking the ivy was up and to the astonishment of the men shining gold lay before their eyes.

“Eureka!” cried Kent. “Wont Baylis crow

now at these old croakers at 'Cisco,—who called him a fool for buying the old claim."

"I'll bet ten dollars he knew what he was about, when he bought the old thing," cried Ben Atherton.

"You bet our boss is no fool," said the foreman; Now to work with a will and see how much dust we can carry home to Baylis."

Baylis had no idea of finding gold. He had another object in working the old claim. The reopening of this mine so many years after the gold fever had died down, caused quite a little excitement in California. After the finding of gold Baylis put in more men and worked the mine till his fortune was secured. His revenge on Ross Crieg was a secondary matter then, yet, when he bought the place he had another revenge in view. He named the mine Ivy Glen mine, because it was found through the ivy. The mine was but a few miles from San Francisco; just about five hours ride from the city.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CRIEG'S RETURN EAST.

“I slept and dreamed that life was beauty :  
I woke and found that life was duty :  
Was then thy dream a shadow lie ?  
Toil on, sad heart, courageously,  
And thou shalt find thy dream to be  
A noonday light and truth to thee.”

A TELEGRAM announcing the serious illness of Mrs. Grey had recalled Orabelle to Albany from New York. It was several months before Mrs. Grey was able to leave her room again, and Orabelle had nearly forgotten some of the events, that had happened while she was in New York, until a letter from Miss Baylis recalled to her mind some of the sayings of young Baylis. Then she went to her aunt's room and conversed sometime with her before she said:

“Auntie, do you know where Uncle Ross went?”

“To California; why do you ask again?”

“When I was visiting Lucy Baylis last fall

her brother came home from San Francisco. One day, while talking with him of California, I mentioned that I had or supposed I had an Uncle somewhere in that clime. He asked his name and I told him. Aunt, there was a queer expression came over his face when I said Ross Crieg, that I could not fathom. He seemed disinclined to answer when I asked if he knew such a man. I pressed the question more to see if I could read his thoughts, than with any idea he knew Uncle Ross, for I thought that improbable. When he did answer, he said he knew a rich man, who lived about five miles from San Francisco who owned a large vineyard, and he believed answered to the name of Ross Crieg. When he said "Ross Crieg," I knew, if I am any judge of faces that he hated the Ross Crieg he knew."

"I am afraid you are too easily impressed with what you see in people's faces."

"But Auntie, I hardly ever fail in my character reading!"

"I am aware of that, but how do you do it?"



All faces look alike to me, as far as character goes."

"I cannot tell you, only I make a study of every face I see."

A puzzled expression came into her eyes and she arose and looked out of the window at the people passing by. Without turning around she asked:

"Auntie, may I write and see if it is Uncle Ross?"

"If this man should prove a stranger, he would think you a silly girl."

"But if he proves my Uncle, would he think me silly?" She turned quickly as she asked: "Auntie, may I write him?"

"Yes. Then if he should prove to be my brother how glad I would be," and a happy look came into the wasted face.

It was this letter written by Orabelle Mitchell that had turned Ross Crieg's face eastward, as he thought of Claud Mitchell and the money left in his trust for Orabelle. It was then he said to his secretary, Dow: "I am going east

to see this young niece of mine, and see what kind of a woman I am trustee for. If she is anything like my sister Lillie, I shall be proud of her."

"You have told me of her father. What if she proves to be like him?"

"Oh! I hope she is not like him! Colonel Belmont was all right, only he was a rebel," and he almost hissed the word "rebel"

"But" said Neil Dow, "you and I, if brought up as the Colonel was, perhaps, would have been just as staunch and true to the south as he."

"True. Look at Haywood! he tells me he was born and brought up in Georgia. Now he has learned that there are good and bad men at the north, the same as in the south."

"Then, how can you let that old hatred for the rebel colonel still rankle in your heart? Perhaps he changed his opinions as you say Haywood has. That reminds me to ask you if you know the reason of his coming here?"

"He says that like Leland Stamford he took

Horace Greeley's advice,—“Go west young man!” having read so much about the gold regions he became imbued with the fever, packed his wardrobe and responded to the cry of—Gold! He came here—and struck it rich—fell in with the gamblers and gambled till his fortune took wings and flew away. That is the reason he gave when he applied for overseer.”

“I wonder if that is true,” musingly said Dow.

“No,” hissed Crieg, “its a lie!”

“What's a lie?” Dow asked quickly.

“Haywood came here at the instigation of that sneak, Baylis.”

“He did! And still you keep him,” he cried as he sprang to his feet and came to the side of Crieg.

“Wait! Sit down and let me tell you what I overheard yesterday.”

After Dow was seated, Crieg told of the conversations already recorded and of the vow of Haywood to become a good man.

“Then I hope he will win the love of the girl, who has brought him to his senses,” said Dow.

Ten days after this conversation with Dow, Ross Crieg was shaking hands with his sister and niece, in their home at Albany. A few hours after his arrival, Orabelle asked why he had not answered their letter.

“I have answered it,” he said.

“Then we never received it,” said Orabelle.

“Yes you have; it is here,” and pointed to himself.

“How can I read you, Uncle?” she cried, her eyes twinkling merrily.

“By word of mouth ” he said “and a kiss in the bargain.”

She drew her face into as grave an expression as she could, and said: “Oh, Uncle, I never kiss the men!”

“You, don’t! Then you are different from all the women I ever saw,” he said, and stopped for the story of Claud came to him at that moment, and he thought how his sister had said,

“ Ross this is sister Lillie’s daughter Orabelle.”

Here was a new thought. Did they mean to deceive him, or would they tell him all by and by? He would wait and see. Then he pleadingly added: “ But you will let an old man, your Uncle, kiss you?”

“ You may kiss me ,” she said, and went to meet him as he arose from his chair, just as he bent to kiss her lips, he pressed her cheek instead.

“ Ho! Ho! What’s this ” he cried his face fairly rippling with smiles.

“ I said I kissed no man, neither are my lips for the kisses of men,” she said so firmly that her aunt thought it best to say:

“ Orabelle made a vow a few years ago, that no man should kiss her lips but her husband,”

“ That will be years hence, then, for I will not consent to any but a prince for my little prude ” he said, pinching her cheek.

She looked up in his face with a laugh, then stepped back a pace and saucily said:

“ I shall not ask my dear Uncle if I can

marry a prince, for—don't laugh—I am already a married woman."

"Nonsense"

He tried his best to say it with surprise, but was sure he had failed.

"A fact Uncle."

"Who is the lucky man? Bring him hither and let me clasp his hand. Now what is the matter? Why these peculiar looks between Aunt and niece? Am I not to know the secret, too?"

"Thereby hangs a tale, which I will tell you, just as soon as you are ready to listen," said Orabelle.

"Ready—one—two——"

"Stop!" And she stamped her foot; you will not hear one word of the tale, if you are going to make fun of me," she said.

He whirled around and when he was seated he was a grave old man. But, oh! it was such hard work to sit there and listen when he already knew the story. But the story from her lips was sadder yet than the story told by Claud,

the absent husband. How well he realized that the little bride was a woman to-day.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### HAYWOOD'S LETTER.

“Just as of old the seasons come and go,  
The summer with its flowers, the winter with its  
snow.

Just as of old the lovers come and go,  
While the silvery moonbeams flit to and fro.”

ANON.

ORABELLE had three rooms at her own disposal in her Aunt's house. As the time of her graduation drew near, she changed her dressing room into a study room, and there her Uncle and Aunt used to sit, when not otherwise engaged, and watch her study. One day near the first of June, Orabelle looked up from her book suddenly, as if some thought had disturbed her studies. She looked at her Uncle so steadily that he raised his eyes and asked her what troubled her.

“I was wondering if you had a friend in California by the name of William Baylis.”

She stopped suddenly, for her Uncle said, with a voice like thunder, “No!”

“Wait, Uncle.”

“Do you know that devil?” he interrupted.

“I met a young man at New York, last fall, who bore that name. It was through him we found you.”

“Did you like him?” he asked.

“Yes and no.”

“That is a queer answer,” he said

“I thought him a self-conceited fop for one thing; and a flirt for another. And then, when I asked him about you, he acted nearly as strangely as you do now. Uncle, what can be the trouble between you two? for, he seemed to hate you, or I do not read facial expressions right.”

“He is a very bad man, Orabelle, besides being a gambler. He has good reasons to hate me as well as I to despise the likes of him,” he said thoughtfully, for he could not explain then.



He was fearful they would ask him more and he would have to tell them more, so he asked them if they knew Haywood.

"No," said Orabelle, "but I have heard Lucy Baylis speak of him. He is a great friend of her brother's."

"Not now," he said.

Orabelle looked at him quickly as though to read his inmost thoughts. She failed to get the meaning of her Uncle's expression. Neither could she get him to give an explanation of his words, for he was trying so hard to not let them know how much he knew concerning them.

Orabelle pleaded so hard, in a letter to Lucy Baylis, for her to come and be with her through graduation, that Lucy decided to grant her request. The innocent mentioning in the letter, of Crieg's overseer, was one great reason of Lucy's trip to Albany. Shortly after her arrival at Mrs. Grey's, she learned the story of Orabelle's marriage. This was a great surprise to her, but it led her to tell of the letter she had received from Haywood. She produced the letter

and asked Orabelle to read it. It was just at twilight, so instead of ringing for lights, Orabelle took the letter to the window and read:

“Miss Baylis, I hardly dare address you, much less call you friend; yet I trust you will pardon your brother’s friend for presuming on your friendship to the extent of writing such a letter as this. I ask as a favor that you read this through before you allow yourself to pass judgment on me. I was born at Atlanta, Georgia; and brought up to think the northern people all wrong. And when I went home from school, at the age of eighteen, and told my parents that I was engaged to a girl from New York, a stormy scene ensued, which I leave you to imagine, for I cannot describe it. I held to my promise against all opposition. When the time came for me to go to New York for the wedding, my parents refused to accompany me so I packed my trunk and started for the home of my bride-to-be. As I was passing the postoffice on my way to the station, I thought I would see if any letters had arrived in the last mail for me. I

received several and among them one from my betrothed, saying: 'You need not come to New York, for I am already married.' To say I was dazed would be putting it rather mildly. I sent my trunk back to the house and went into a tavern. The next I knew I awoke in a hotel in Baltimore. A friend stood over me and I asked him where I was and what had happened. He said he had found me on the street—I am ashamed to say it now—crazy drunk. He had taken care of me there, and when I was able to leave, tried to coax me to go home. I have never been home since. The reason why I will tell you. I have since learned that the girl I loved in my teens was fickle-minded, and that through my father's influence and money she was led to jilt me in that way. It took many years to convince me of her worthlessness, and teach me to say I was glad I was free from such as she. Now I'll go back to myself. I drifted with the tide till I drifted to the gold mines of California. There I found gold until I counted my money by the hundreds of thousands. Oh,

if I had only done as my mother wrote me! But I'll cease these vain regrets. I fell in with two gamblers who fleeced me out of my gold; and then I completed the trio and helped to fleece others out of their gold. I am going to tell you the truth, let it be ever so much against me. I have been everything that was bad, except to become a burglar or a murderer. Now, when I was in your home, I fell in love with you. I went away without one word of love leaving my lips. I tried to live it down, but for love of you I could not go on in the old life. Whether you can return my love or not, your lovely face has come between me and evil and saved me; for I shall break from my old companions and become a law-abiding citizen. Think over this letter; and if you can give me one little ray of hope—not hastily—write me. As God is my judge, I swear to you, whether you love me or not, that I will never gamble or touch one drop of liquor as a beverage again, so long as I live."

Orabelle turned and searched the face of Lucy.

“Have you answered this?” she asked.

“No,” said Lucy.

“Why not?” she asked. “Couldn’t you love him, or do you love another?”

“I certainly love no one else; and if I thought he truly loved me I would answer the letter,” she said, partly to herself and partly to Orabelle.

“Oh, wait a moment!” cried Orabelle, and then hastily left the room.

In a few moments she came back to the study room, leading her Uncle Ross by the hand. When she had seated him in a chair by the table, and the lights were in order, she said to Lucy:

“Uncle Ross knows Lee Haywood, for he is Uncle’s overseer at one of his vineyards. So if you are willing, I want Uncle to read that letter and tell us if it is true.”

Lucy hesitated a few moments, then placed the letter in front of Ross Crieg, giving him permission to read. He read the letter, sat silent a moment, then asked:

“Miss Baylis, will you allow an old man like me to ask if you love him? You need not hesi-

tate, for this letter is all true; and I believe he will keep his vow," he said, as he saw how she hesitated.

"I will say this much," she answered, "I have never seen a man so near to my ideal of a husband as Lee Haywood; but I cannot say I love him. Orabelle, you have read the letter; you know how I feel toward him. What is your advice?"

She looked at Lucy thoughtfully, then ran to the bookshelf, took down a scrap book, opened it and placed her finger on a page as she placed the book in Lucy's lap, saying:

"These verses will give you my sentiments."

And the merry twinkling of her eyes pleased her Uncle.

"Aloud, Miss Baylis," he cried, "read them aloud!"

She read in a quiet manner the following verses:

"A father sat by the chimney-post  
On a winter's day, enjoying a roast;  
By his side a maiden young and fair,

A girl with a wealth of golden hair;  
And she teases the father, stern and cold,  
With a question of duty, trite and old:  
'Say, father, say, what shall a maiden do  
When a man of merit comes to woo?  
And, father, what of this pain in my breast?  
Married or single—which is the best?'  
Then the sire of the maiden young and fair,  
The girl of the wealth of golden hair,  
He answers as ever do fathers cold,  
To the question of duty trite and old:  
'She who weddeth keeps God's letter;  
She who weds not, doeth better.'  
Then meekly answered the maiden fair:  
The girl with the wealth of golden hair,  
'I'll keep the sense of the holy letter,  
Content to do well without doing better.'"

"Then you believe in keeping God's holy letter," cried Crieg to Orabelle, as Miss Lucy finished reading.

"Yes, in one sense of the word. Don't you, Lucy?"

"I think I see which way you are drifting," she said smiling; "so I'll say this much. I will write to Mr. Haywood, that if he keeps his vow for one year more and if he and I think the same, then I will give him a ray of hope."

“Good! Oh! there is the bell for lunch, let us hasten!”

The time of Orabelle's graduation drew near, then she went to her teachers and told them she was married, and her husband was in Germany finishing his education. That under the circumstances she wished to receive her diploma from the Superintendent, without the accustomed Miss before her name. Her wish was granted but it caused many comments.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BRIDE'S THEFT.

“Behold, we live through all things—famine, thirst,  
Bereavement, pain, all grief and misery,  
All woe and sorrow ; life inflicts its worst  
On soul and body—but we cannot die,  
Though we be sick, and tired, and faint, and worn ;  
Lo ! All things can be borne.”

ALLEN.

**B**EFORE Orabelle would consent to accompany her Uncle to California, she made







VIEW OF ONEONTA OF TO-DAY

them promise to take her to visit her old home in Oneonta. She declared it was home no more for how a few years had changed the place.

Four years sometimes makes a city.

(Oneonta of to-day contains a population of about 10,000 inhabitants. It is on the line of the Delaware and Hudson railroad — whose shops employ many hundreds of hands. There is a silh mill, a shirt factory, a knitting mill, a flour mill, several cigar factories, bicycle works and many other smaller industries. The business streets are lined with fine brick blocks. The residential streets are unequalled in any place between Albany and Binghamton.

The town has an electric railroad and is lighted by electricity. It is here that one of the finest Normal Schools in the state is situated, besides a high school and several smaller ones.)

Mr. and Mrs. Mitchel were very much surprised at the change they saw in Orabelle; for from a girl of fourteen, she had developed into a young lady of more than pleasing appearance.

The thin sallow cheeks had rounded out and were tinged with red. The eyes had a sparkle that gave, on first acquaintance, the idea that she was brimming over with fun and frolic. But when in animated conversation those sparkling eyes helped to show forth the ideas of the soul of the speaker; and it was then that people called her beautiful.

“It is September now and we must be in San Francisco by the 15th of January,” Crieg had said to Mrs. Mitchel one day, and Orabelle heard him.

“Oh, Uncle,” she cried “that is my birthday! I can’t go until after that——” she stopped in confusion, for the thought came—“perhaps, Claud might come home at that time.” She blushed as she turned to Mrs. Mitchel and asked:

“Mother, has Claud finished his education yet?”

“Not quite, I believe. We hope to have him home in one more year,” she answered slowly, thinking it was a good plan they had

kept them apart. She knew that should those two meet now, their future would be spoiled and that must not be.

“Uncle Ross and mother, I have always had an idea—why, I can give no reason, but I had the idea that my absent husband would return on that day, so if I am not to see him, I would just as soon be in California as here, on my birthday.”

“Do you wish to see him?” Mrs. Mitchel cautiously asked.

“Does any true wife wish to see her husband after four years absence?” She asked with eyes blazing and cheeks aflame.

“Did you love him when you married him?” Mrs. Mitchel asked.

“No,” she said as though disgusted with her for asking the question.

“Yet you wish to see him—surely you cannot love him now!”

“But I do?” And the blushes went surging over neck and face, as she answered. “I have studied over the reason of my marriage and

how. Claud talked that morning—Oh! Every word and act of ours, on that morning so long ago, is stamped upon my heart—till sometimes I believe that the love I bear my husband sprang into my heart that morning, when he called me his “Little Wife.”

Crieg seemed very nervous, yet kept silent, fearing to say what he wished to say, lest he tell of Claud. Mrs. Mitchel went to the side of Orabelle with tears shining in her eyes, gathered her into her arms, as she said:

“May he love you as well when you two shall meet again is the only wish of my heart, my precious daughter!”

“Mine too! mine too!” said Crieg.

He was fearful of a scene between them and a woman in tears he always shunned.

“You have met Clau—” she hesitated, for Crieg’s actions seemed to say: “Stop!” As he said nothing, Mrs. Mitchel added: “Do you think Claud will love her?”

“I feel as though, from what I know of this strange contract—” he won’t say marriage—





CLAUD MITCHEL



“that they will come as near my ideal lovers, as two peas are alike in the same pod.”

“Uncle, you have used a queer comparison,” laughed Orabelle.

“I am queer, anyway,” he said.

At the request of Mrs. Mitchel, Orabelle had some pictures taken while there, and left one for Claud. They did not offer one of Claud's to her in return, so she, on the morning of her return to Albany, purloined one from the album.

When telling her aunt of their visit and of the many changes that had taken place there, she thought of her theft, and took the picture from her pocket, as she said:

“Auntie, here is the first thing I ever stole, that I know of. I feel I had a right to it, yet I certainly did steal it!” and a guilty smile passed over her lips as she handed the card to her aunt.

“Why did you do it?” she asked as she gazed on the photograph.

“I saw the picture and wanted it. I left one of mine for Claud; and when they did not offer me one of his and I saw several—I just made up

my mind to have one at any cost, so I just borrowed this one."

"When the owner was absent, eh! well I don't say I am not ashamed of you for I am, yet, my child, I can't scold you, for I think I should have done the same thing, wouldn't you, Ross?" she asked her brother, as he came into the room and sat down.

"Done what? I shall have to hear what it is before I can answer you?"

The story of the stolen picture was soon retold. When they had shown him the picture, he said roughly:

"They did not beat you, and I am heartily glad of it!"

"Kate, there is something queer in the way the Mitchel's act about the children," said Crieg to his sister. "I tried to coax Mr. Mitchel to allow them to correspond, but he would not hear one word about it. He said it was only for one more year they would have to wait and he did not believe in mixing love and studies together."

Then he ceased for he came near saying that he knew Claud and that he did not intend saying. That was another surprise Orabelle must meet with on her eighteenth birthday.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE JOURNEY AND CRIEG'S NEST.

“Courage christian! do not stumble,  
Though thy path be dark as night,  
There's a star to guide the humble;  
Trust in God, and do the right.”

MCLEOD.

JENNIE North had said many times before Orabelle, that she would be delighted to spend a season in California if she only had friends there, but to go alone she never would. A remembrance of her words came to Orabelle, as she was making preparations, one day, for their journey.

She hastened to inform her Uncle and Aunt of her friend's views and wishes.

They counseled her to invite Miss North to

company them. She complied with their wishes and the result was Miss North made one of the party that journeyed westward that fall. They spent many weeks in their journey, for after leaving the Mississippi, they left the direct route and went many miles out of their way; for Crieg was bent upon Orabelle's seeing more of the West in a short time, than Claud had in the several months that he had spent there. Of course they visited Yellowstone park and the Yosemite Valley—as all sight-seekers will.

There was one place Orabelle called the enchanted city, and by some it is called the "City not made by hands." This was a sandstone formation more marvelous to her than all other scenes of rocks or land or waterfalls or geysers. When they came near enough to see the church spires in the distance, Orabelle exclaimed:

"What city is that in the distance, Uncle!"

"The city not made by hands," he replied, watching her closely.

"Not made with hands! how can that be?" the ladies said.

“That, ladies, is a sandstone formation,” said Crieg. They turned to him for an explanation, but as they had approached so near, he did not answer. The nearer they approached this marvelous architecture of the elements, they could not repress exclamations of wonder and delight. Streets were plainly visible; massive temples with their spires and domes; monuments of every conceivable shape; towers and minarets, all formed of pure white silica, which glittered in the bright sunlight like walls of crystal.

Upon entering the confines of this magical city, they were soon undeceived, for what looked at a distance, a city, was, in reality, a mass of white sandstone, worn by the winds and waters into a wonderful similitude of a magnificent city.

“Who can wonder that travelers become so enamored with the wealth of scenery in the far west!” exclaimed Orabelle.

They arrived at Crieg’s Nest two days before Orabelle’s birthday. On that eventful day

Crieg invited the ladies to ride with him over his vineyards. After they viewed these vineyards, he told them that about one mile from there was the vineyard of Orabelle.

“Mine! Uncle, why jest?” She asked in wonderment.

“I am not jesting,” he replied, and smiled at the surprised looks of the three ladies.

“Ross,” his sister said, “you surely are jesting. How came Orabelle by property here?”

“That’s the leading question, Kate,” he evasively said.

“Well, if you are not jesting, tell us how she came by this——”

“Left her by a friend,” he interrupted. “Now, here we are; And, there is Haywood ready to give us a welcome home,” he cried, as he reined the horses through a gate and stopped at a house. He soon assisted the ladies to descend from the wagon, and introduced them to Haywood. When he came to Orabelle, he said:

“This is my niece, Mrs. Mitchel. She has come to interview you about her property.

To her you must give an account of all the proceedings, also the books must be examined by her."

"My books are in excellent order, sir, and I can soon explain all the business to her. I am glad to meet the lady by whom I have been employed," Haywood made answer.

"Sir, I have not employed you, for I have no reason of——" she began to slowly say, when:

"Wait a moment, Orabelle!" Her Uncle cried. "Wait till we get in the house and seated, then I will explain."

When everything had been explained, Orabelle arose and placed her hand beneath her Uncle's chin and turned his face upwards.

She looked steadily into his eyes for a moment, then asked: "Uncle are you deceiving me?"

"I have told you the truth" he said in reply.

"Then my husband intended to desert his Baby bride all these years! No, no! I cannot believe it," she cried. "He was too noble

that morning to have urged me into the marriage and after it was done, he could not be so cruel—" tears stopped her speech.

"He does not intend to be husband in name only; he will return when his education is finished. Orabelle, listen! His parents knew no more about this than you, for it was Claud's wishes," her Uncle said in a convincing voice; yet he did not tell how Claud came by the money.

Orabelle soon comprehended the situation and learned to take the control into her own hands. She told her Uncle that his advice she should always need, if her husband never returned.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE OLD AND THE NEW.

"Be sure you are off with the old love,  
Before you are ready to put on the new."

ONE day, while conversing with Ross Crieg, Miss North mentioned the name of Baylis, and the queer looks and actions of Crieg caused



her to ask: "Mr. Crieg, do you know the man?"

"As well as I want to know a man of that kind," he said, rather impatiently.

"Isn't he a good man?"

"A good man! he's a devil," he growled.

"Mr. Crieg—I see by your looks and manner that you know more than you wish to say. Now, I have confidence in you, and I want you to tell me just the kind of man he is, for I am betrothed to him. Once our marriage has been postponed. Why, I never knew; only a telegram from here, and he said business called him home. I have seen him but once since then. He seemed strange to me then; and after he met your niece—"

"Good Heavens!" cried Crieg, showing intense excitement.

"Wait a moment, sir. I thought he fell in love with her, but she seemed to repulse any advance of his—"

"Good!" he said, and seemed to be pleased with her remark.

"Yes, she did. Then I could not see the

reason of it, now I think I can. After he met her, he was cool toward me and never spoke of marriage again. I began to debate with myself, for I was too proud to say one word to him, and I thought he was after my money. I thought I loved him then, but now I know I did not. Yet, I have not broken my promise for I hold it a sacred vow."

"Break it just as soon as you can," he cried excitedly.

"Why?"

"Listen! He came here, to seek his vengeance on me for saving Claud Mitchel from becoming a gambler. You know I told how Orabelle came by that property but did not tell how Claud came by the money?"

"Yes."

"Well, here is how it happened," and he related the story of Claud's gambling, also of Baylis trying for revenge and why his wedding was postponed. Crieg told her to make assurance doubly sure; and she accepted his advice and went to San Francisco in quest of that

knowledge. On her return from San Francisco, Miss North informed Crieg that she had found that Baylis bore a worse name there, than he, Crieg, had given him. She sent back all the presents she had received, and immediately broke her engagement with Baylis.

“I hope I may never see him again,” she said, when this was done; “but how thankful I am that his revenge on you failed, and that I am still free,” she had said to Crieg.

“I have one request. Don't tell his poor sister the true reason,” said Crieg.

“That I'll promise, for I love her dearly,” she had answered.

About the first of March, the news of William Baylis' marriage to Nettie Dean of Sacramento came to Crieg's Nest's inmates. This gladdened their hearts, for they thought it might end his evil career. Little did they think this was part of his plan for revenge upon Ross Crieg. He had taken this young girl from a low den or dive in the city, under the promise of marriage. He went through the ceremony

but Hill performed the minister's part. He took his mistress to his home at Ivy Glen mine. He was perfecting his plans in such a manner that when he struck the blow, he thought, no one would look to him as the one who dealt it. His spies were watching every move at Crieg's Nest. Not a person there but Baylis knew of their daily movements and habits. Yet not one of those at the Nest dreamed of this surveillance.

Neil Dow had never been in the habit of coming to the Nest for orders, but after the arrival of Jennie North he had said to Crieg, that as he had ladies at the house, he would save him extra trips down to the office. Crieg consented to Dow's plan; thus every evening found Dow at the Nest. Finally Crieg began to watch them closely and became convinced that mutual love abided between Miss North and Dow. He called his niece one day, and confided his thoughts to her. Orabelle watched them when next they met, and told her Uncle she "believed he was right."

“Mr. Crieg, have you known Mr. Dow a long time?” asked Jennie North, one April morning.

“Yes, several years,” he said.

“Do you think he is a man that would be true to his wife?” asked Miss North, while Orabelle turned to her with surprise and asked:

“Jennie, why do you ask Uncle?”

“When he told me of Will Baylis, he gave me good advice. Now I have another offer, and I wish his advice again,” she answered with a smile.

“I have never known Neil Dow to do one unkind or evil deed,” answered Crieg.” “I think his habits are good, temper fine and disposition good. I guess that is about all, only he is poor,” said Crieg very slowly.

“Don’t you know that poverty does not stand in his way! I care not that,” and she snapped her fingers; “I have enough for both—certainly more than two need.”

“I do not think Dow knows you are wealthy,” musingly said Crieg.

“Then do not tell him,” said Jennie.

The wooing of Dow passed quite smoothly. He urged for an early marriage. And the first day of May saw the twain made one, after which they started immediately for the east. Dow was somewhat surprised on their arrival at Albany to find that his dowerless bride was a millionaire. But a surprise of this kind never causes any serious trouble.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### ORABELLE DISAPPEARS.

“Sad! sad indeed is a soul by doubt oppressed,  
And so filled with torture, the heart is distressed,”

**O**RABELLE had been in California two months, when she purchased a pair of ponies and learned to ride. She was in the habit of riding many miles every pleasant day. About the middle of May she started on her pony alone to see why it was that Haywood's message called her to the vineyard so urgently, for he had never sent for her before. She had been

gone nearly an hour, when her horse dashed into the yard at the Nest, covered with foam and a broken bit dangling at its side. This threw the household into the greatest alarm for the safety of Orabelle. Hastily summoning her brother from the vineyards, Mrs. Grey urged that search should be made at once. Crieg mounted a swift horse and sped over the supposed route that Orabelle had taken. When he arrived at the overseer's house he learned that she had not been there.

"She started immediately after receiving your message," said Crieg to Haywood.

"My message! I have sent Mrs. Mitchel no message," he cried in alarm.

"What! you deny it?"

"I do. If I had needed any instructions I should have sent for them," Haywood said.

"Haywood, she received a note, we thought it your handwriting, asking her to come over here immediately and see about some business that must be attended to to-day, signed by your name," he said with bowed head. Hay-

wood was silent. Then raising his head Crieg said:

“Can you leave here for some time and join in the search?”

“I think so. I’ll leave my instructions and be with you in a few minutes, ready to go,” answered Haywood.

“Be quick about it for there is not a moment to lose.”

A searching party was soon sent out but their search was in vain. Orabelle had disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed her within its depths. Crieg set detectives to work on the case but they were baffled.

After weeks of vain search for the missing girl, Crieg sent a letter to the Mitchels, informing them of what had happened and what had been done. Telling them he thought it best for Claud to be informed; for he could see no reason for her disappearance. He thought Claud ought to come home and assist in the search.

The Mitchels waited sometime before they



answered the letter of Crieg's. When they did write for more information concerning their missing daughter, he had no more news than he had already given to write them; but he still urged them to send for Claud.

When Orabelle left her uncle's home, she hurried along until within a quarter of a mile of her own door, where, seeing some pretty flowers she hastily dismounted to gather them. She had seen two horsemen, seemingly following her, but she paid no attention to them until they galloped up and dismounted as they accosted her. She started up in alarm but thought best not to show any fear before them. While one held her attention, the other slyly went behind her, threw over her head a cloak of heavy cloth, which muffled the scream she gave. Then the other man said it was no use to scream for no one was in sight. She struggled so violently that they chloroformed her. After they succeeded in quieting her, they broke the bit and lashed her horse into a frenzy, then started him homewards.

Then the men mounted their horses, and one bore the extra burden of an inanimate woman. They turned backward over the same road and a few moments ride brought them to a road turning to the left, which they rode over very quickly until they reached the hut at Ivy Glen mine.

When Orabelle first opened her eyes, she could not think what had happened that she should be in that strange place. As soon as she stirred a young woman came to her side, saying :

“You are better now, ain’t you?” and as Orabelle began to question her, she added, “Keep quiet and you will soon be well.”

“But where am I? Am I sick? Who brought me here?” were some of the questions Orabelle asked from time to time.

“Two men from the mine found you where your horse had thrown you; they said you were stunned, when you did not revive,” the woman had said in answer to her queries, for that was what she had been told.

“My horse threw me! I do not believe it,” said Orabelle, “Where is the master?” she asked at another time.

“In Sacramento. Shall I tell him you want to see him when he comes?”

“Yes,” she said, but when she saw she could learn no more from her, who supposed herself the wife of William Baylis, she said: “please go and leave me alone.”

After the woman left the room, Orabelle tried to arise but was too weak yet from the effects of the anaesthetic, which came near being an overdose.

Just as the shades of evening were darkening the room a man's form entered the door-way. Orabelle looked up at the sound and waited for the figure to advance.

“Who is it?” she asked as the silence became unbearable.

The man entered the room then, closed and fastened the door behind him. As he advanced closer to the bed Orabelle recognized him and screamed.

“Hush! do not alarm yourself, for I will not harm you,” he said kindly.

“William Baylis, what does this mean?” she cried out angrily, and too astonished to think of any reason for him to be there.

“It means that you are in my power; and that here you will have to stay in this temporary prison, unless you promise to become my wife!”

“Your wife! Where is your wife” she asked hoarsely.

“I have no wife,” he said with an evil smile. “And now, speak lower or you will not fare so well when I am gone, if that girl hears you,” and he motioned towards the other room.

“No wife!” she said in astonishment; “We heard you married a girl from Sacramento, early in the spring.”

“Ha! Ha! that’s out is it,” and he laughed heartily.

“Then you own the marriage.”

“Not so loud,” he said fiercely, “I tell you I am not married.”

“Then you are ——,” she stopped and looked at him with an inquiring look. She was searching for the truth in the expression of his face.

“I guess you have the right thought now; it was a mock marriage,” he said with a cunning leer.

“Oh, you hideous monster! Get out of my sight. And oh! let me go home.”

“Home you never go, only as my wife!”

“Listen! I am already a wife; and if I desired such a union, you see it could not be,” she said, thinking that would be all she need say. But she had no idea of the man she had to deal with.

“Miss Mitchel, I fell in love with you when you and I met in New York; and I swore then by fair or foul means to win you for my wife. When I learned that you were the niece of Ross Crieg, then I said I would win you in such a manner that he would shun you ever after. Think you he will ever speak with you again when he finds out where you are?”

“Is this your revenge on that poor old man?”

Do you realize what you have done? You have stolen another man's wife," she said slowly.

"Are you telling me the truth?" he hoarsely asked, for he had thought her fooling when she said she was a wife.

"Yes," she said, "I was married the next morning after Christmas, four years ago last winter."

"To whom?" he almost yelled in his intense excitement. This was something he had not thought of and his plans did not meet this.

"Claud Mitchel," she answered, wondering why he asked.

An evil look passed over his face when she gave the name of her husband.

"Where is he?" he hisses.

"In Germany, finishing his education."

"There I hope he'll stay! So my revenge is greater than I thought."

Here he turned his evil eyes upon her in one long triumphant look.

"Mrs. Mitchel, so you claim your name to be, I will promise no harm shall come to you, if

you will promise to never seek to leave here, and to allow us to call you Nora Belle. Will you promise?"

"No, I will not!"

"Then I shall confine you entirely to this room. These people you see here are all in my employ and will do my every bidding. I do not wish to use violence, but here you must stay."

"And if I promise?" she gasped.

"You shall have all the liberties of the yard and good treatment. Will you promise?"

"Yes," she said, thinking that if she promised she would have some chance to make an escape.

She tried many times, but failed to bribe any of the people she saw. Once she gained quite a distance ahead of her pursuers in an attempted flight, but not knowing the way she was captured and returned to the old hut.

When Baylis knew that Claud Mitchel's wife was in his power, then he thought he had a double revenge within his grasp.



ORABELLE AT EIGHTEEN



for about two years, since you gave me such a scolding?"

"I remember well, how angry you were at that time and supposed that was the reason."

"That was one reason. Then I made up my mind to work hard and not fool my opportunities away; for my people wrote my wife was studious and if I was not careful would have the best education."

Dr. Glynn arched his eyebrows at this, but waited for Claud to finish his story.

After a moment Claud resumed:

"They wrote me that her one idea seemed to be—that she must be perfect in everything—so I shall not have one vain regret when I go to claim her."

As he unfolded the package in his hands he said: "She has sent me her picture. What do you think of my little wife now?" he asked as he put the picture in the doctor's hand. Dr. Glynn gazed thoughtfully at the picture, then exclaimed: "I think you a fool!"

"What!" Claud wrathfully cried.

“Let me see,” he began calmly, “I believe I said years ago, that a plain little girl might make a beautiful woman; and surely, if this is the face of your wife, she is a beautiful woman. If this is a true picture of her—what a woman she will make—true to everything that is right and woe to the wrongdoing that comes under her jurisdiction, I should say.”

“Your study of her picture, and mine are something alike, but, don’t you dare to do as I have done!” he said, a sort of chuckle in his voice.

“Why, what have you done?”

“I fell in love with the picture.”

“Fell in love with your wife! Oh, Claud, that is too good to keep! if I ever see her I shall tell her of this——”

“Fred, hush!”

“Is this the first attack?” he questioned jokingly.

Claud ignored his question and asked:

“What would you do if you like me had a wife in America, if she had disappeared from her

home; and friends there could not find the slightest clue to her hiding place?"

"Go and search for her just as fast as steam and water could get me there," he answered quickly.

"Will you go with me?"

"Will I go with you! what do you mean?"

"Read this letter from my father and you will know all I do about it."

After reading the letter he asked:

"How soon will you start?"

"I have looked up the steamers and find I cannot leave Liverpool until the 30th, so I will be here five days, yet, you see. Won't you go with me, instead of to Italy?"

When the first American bound steamer left Liverpool, Claud Mitchel and Fred Glynn were among its passengers. The wind and weather being favorable, they had a pleasant passage across the Atlantic, instead of the long coveted Italian journey.

Without stopping to give Dr. Glynn a chance to see New York, they hurried on to the

Mitchel home and learned all the news of the missing woman, they had received there, then, on to California. Mr. Mitchel joined them in their search for the missing woman.

Once, when they were talking about Orabelle's flight, Glynn said:

"Mr. Mitchel, do you think this Crieg would give you a welcome at his house?"

"I am sure he would; why?"

"I think, as Claud has been there once, now he has a beard and probably no one would recognize him at first, he had better take the name of Wells, or Leon Wells. He and I will stop at San Francisco. You go on to the home of Crieg; and when we meet, we must meet as strangers, or as traveling companions."

"I don't want to go under a false name," Claud said petulantly.

"If duty calls, obey that call," said Glynn.

"But duty doesn't call a man to use a false name," Claud replied sternly.

"I think it does in this case. You have been known there years ago; are going there now in

search of your wife, who is missing. The reason of this mystery we do not know. Whether she or you prove the cause, you had best not be known, let them think you in Europe."

"Claud, I believe the doctor is right. We will let him lead us," Mr. Mitchel said, after a moment's thought.

"If you say so, father, I'll be guided by you," he acquiesced.

They called him Leon Wells from that moment; and before they reached California he said he could answer just as promptly to that name as to his own. When they arrived at San Francisco, they hired a man to carry them out to Crieg's Nest.

Glynn and Wells remained in the carriage while Mr. Mitchel went to ascertain if he was welcome. He returned in a few moments for his baggage, and informed them that no more news of the missing one had been gained. They returned to the city, and took up their abode at the same hotel that had sheltered Claud when last in San Francisco.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A MISTAKE AND THE RESULT.

“There was one who offered a helping hand  
To guide her home to the loving band.”

HILL, I have found you at last. Where have you been for three weeks?”

“Hid! Say Baylis, they have got two new ones from the east, ‘Clip’ says,” Hill made answer in a hushed voice. Baylis’ detective, Clip, had taken Glynn and Wells for two real detectives.

“Bah! What do I care? They can put all the detectives in the world on our track, and they will never find her,” he said, as though he, William Baylis, would never be tripped up in his plans.

“Don’t be too sure. They may squeal on us at the mine.”

“They do not know enough! But, come, tell me the news from the Nest.”

“Clip says her father has come from the east and joined in the search.”

“Good! The more trouble I can make the better suited I am. But enough of this. Nettie says many things that shows she is getting some inkling of this affair from some source, and is getting rather frisky over it. She thinks I have lost my love for her. As if I ever had any,” he chuckled, “and she threatens me.”

“Are you afraid of her?”

“No and yes. She might make it warm for us, if she knew enough to make use of the knowledge she has of our affairs, just at present.

“While Baylis was speaking a man from the mine came and handed him a note, then turned and left without more ado. Baylis read it, then turned to Hill with horror, saying:

“Good God! Hill, Nettie says she thinks Nora has diphtheria and wants help quick, if I care whether she lives or dies. I cannot send a doctor from this place up there, for they would know her.”

“Perhaps there is a stranger to be found,” Hill answered after a moment.

“Go! Look over every register in the city;

and if you find one, bring him to the house, but swear him to secrecy first."

Hill searched diligently, and luck or fate sent him after Dr. Glynn. Here is his one great mistake. Dr. Glynn supposed he was going to see the crazy sister of William Baylis, the rich owner of Ivy Glen mine.

Soon after his entrance into the presence of the sick girl, he recognized the likeness between the picture of Mitchel's wife and the prostrate woman before him.

He worked faithfully for her recovery and when she was able to talk, he told her he was a friend; and if she would tell him her name and why she was there, he would help her.

She tried three times to tell him her story, before they were left alone long enough, and then he had just time to say:

"Then I'll save you, if you will do just as I say; get well first; and trust me you——" He stopped and hastily added, for he heard them coming, "take every bit of this in this glass, then the other kind. If you are any worse let



me know tonight. I will come again in the morning," in a professional manner and went back to the city.

When she was able to leave the bed and walk around the room, and had heard no more of his rescuing, she thought he was only another agent of Baylis's, who had tried to pacify her.

"Where have you been, Fred?" asked Wells, as we shall call him for a little time, when Glynn came in from his fifth professional trip.

"I have been out among the mines."

"Prospecting?" Wells said jokingly.

"Yes. Come up to my room and I'll tell you of my find."

When seated in the room he asked Claud for one more look at his wife's picture. He reluctantly produced the picture from an inner pocket.

Glynn gazed long at the face pictured there. At last he half muttered: "Yes, it is the same!"

"The same! what mean you, Fred Glynn? Have you seen my wife?" he asked impatiently.

"Patience, Leon, patience! I have been

called up to Ivy Glen mine to see a diphtheria patient—sworn to keep it a secret, too—and now I break that oath, for I feel it is a good reason I have for doing so.”

“Never mind your oath and your reasons, but tell me quick,” said Wells impatiently.

“Don’t be hasty, Leon? I think the girl I saw there was your wife. Hold! Where are you going?” As Wells dashed for the door. He paused and listened to the doctor.

“It will do you no good to do a rash act. I think I know your wishes, but listen to me. She is very sick and to move her at present would endanger her life.”

“What shall I do?” he asked, as he sank into a chair; “Leave her in that villain’s power I will not!” he exclaimed fiercely.

“Be reasonable, Leon! Let us go to work and weave a web around those villains in such a manner, that when it is closed they cannot escape. I mean to close up the trap just as soon as I think it prudent to move Mrs. Mitchel from her present abode.”

“Are you sure it is Orabelle?”

“I cannot be positive, but I’ll make sure in the morning. Then if we are right we will drive out to the Nest, and start the ball rolling.”

After talking with his patient and learning all she could tell of her confinement in this secret place, he returned, and with Wells drove out to the Nest.

It was thought best for Claud and his friend to keep in the dark as much as possible, and leave the detectives to do the work.

When the net was ready to catch their fish, Mr. Mitchel, Mrs. Grey, Mr. Crieg and several policemen in plain clothes, started out to visit Ivy Glen mine under the pretense of buying, if Mrs. Grey was suited after the others were satisfied with their inspection.

When the mine had been inspected and proven satisfactory, Mrs. Grey with a sweet smile turned to Baylis and asked:

“Isn’t there a house of some kind goes with the mine?”

“Yes,” impatiently, “step this way a bit

and you can see it up there," and he pointed towards the north, but made no move to show them farther.

"Oh, I must see that, too? I could not buy the mine without the house," she said and slyly winked to her brother.

Baylis seemed to reculantly comply with their wishes. He cast suspicious glances at them, all the way to the house, though nothing but comments on the scenery were made; and they lingered along as though they were in no hurry, or even in haste to go inside when they reached the shanty.

Baylis tried his best to keep them outside, showing the ivy which had been the means of their finding gold so plentiful; and when inside the house, he tried to keep them from Orabelle's room saying his crazy sister had that room and was just recovering from diptheria.

Mrs. Grey seemed determined to see every room in the house and so his efforts failed—as they knew they would—and they compelled him to unlock the door.

At the opening of the door Orabelle looked up from the book she held in her hand, and sprang to her Uncle's side, crying:

“ Uncle Ross, save me!”

Crieg clasped her in his arms as he turned to the men saying; “ Do your duty!”

“ Don't cry, darling, we have come to save you. Here is Aunt Kate, too,” he said, his voice choked with tears of joy.

Orabelle was so overcome with excitement, that it was several hours before the party dare set out on their return journey.

On the way home Orabelle pointed out where she had stopped to gather flowers, when she was kidnapped.

Baylis was tried and convicted. Sentenced to ten years at hard labor; but he died before five years of that sentence had been served out; and thus his sister became the owner of Ivy Glen mine.

When Claud saw his father alone, he begged for permission to woo Orabelle under the name of Wells. He argued so well that when and he

Glynn went to Crieg's Nest, to see the lady that Glynn had helped to save, Mr. Mitchel still called him Leon Wells.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### CONCLUSION.

“Oh, the world it is a good place, and I would never die,  
While there's a kiss unstolen, from a lass that loves the thief;  
But if she would grow unfaithful there were none so lost as I;  
I would go into another world and get me some relief.”

**T**HROUGH the influence of Orabelle, for the good treatment received at her hand, while confined at Ivy Glen mine, Nettie Dean was sent to an eastern school for young ladies. She is now ranked among our best teachers.

About six weeks after her rescue and return to Crieg's Nest, Orabelle said to her Aunt and Uncle: “I think I shall return east, soon.”

“Why?” They both cried.

“Oh, I cannot stay here!”

“Don’t you like it here?” Her Uncle asked.

“Yes, but I must go back home,” she sobbed.

“What is it, dear child?” He asked as he threw an arm around the girl. “Confide in your old Uncle,” he pleaded.

“If I do you will be ashamed of me,” she said.

“I think not,” he answered.

“One reason is, my husband may return.”

“Fudge!” Cried Crieg.

“The other reason, I cannot stay here in the presence of that doctor’s friend!”

“I see! I see! You should have kept that heart of thine under better control, dear, and not given it away before your husband came.”

“Stop! Uncle, you are taking too much for granted. I will prove faithful to my marriage vow!”

“Even though you perish.”

“Uncle!” She interrupted.

“Orabelle, did you know this marriage could be annulled?” Her Uncle asked.

“No! Don’t speak of it. I will never seek a divorce!” And she swept from the room.

“Kate,” said Crieg after the door closed, I have been afraid of this happening all the time.”

“So have I. If the words of Orabelle conveyed her thoughts correctly, I think it would be well to speak to Mr. Mitchel; hint to him how we feel and see if he won’t think of some way to send young Wells away. Still I wish she were free; for I like him, and I am inclined to think he likes her.”

“I have thought so; but I thought she would see it and repulse him,” said Crieg.

“I think she is capable of fighting her own battles,” said Mrs. Grey.

When Orabelle left their presence, she followed a foot path that led down the rocks to the sea; but a short distance from the house, she paused at a sheltered spot from the sun, and sat down to think out what course to pursue.

She was ashamed of herself to think she, a married woman, had allowed another man to win her love.



She had become so nervous since her return, that any noise made her start with fear.

Just now a step on the mossy ledge made her shriek. A well known voice asked:

“What is it darling?”

“Don't! Don't!” She cried, and put out her hand as though to ward off a blow.

He caught her hand and drew her to him, for at that moment her vow returned to him, and quicker than a wink of the eye, he had snatched a kiss from her lips.

It was so unexpected that she did not have time to prevent it. She wrenched herself free from him as she exclaimed:

“How dare you insult me in that way!”

Her eyes glittered and her cheeks flushed with anger as she said it.

“How dare I?” He asked. “Because I love you,” he answered as lovingly as he could, for he was too full of mirth to put his thoughts into words.

“Love me! A married woman!” She cried.

“No?” He queried.

"I am, and know I do wrong listening to this much," she said bursting into tears.

He sprang to her side saying:

"Darling do not cry, and you shall be tortured no more. Give me one kiss," and he bent to kiss her, when she drew her fingers down across his cheek leaving three long red marks of her finger nails, as she sprang from him and ran towards the house, with Claud in pursuit—for it was Claud.

Ross Crieg had found Mr. Mitchel, during this time, and told him their ideas concerning Leon Wells and Orabelle.

"Hem!" He had said with a peculiar smile "I'll give him a hint to leave. Look there! And he pointed to Orabelle running at full speed with Claud in close pursuit.

In a moment Orabelle paused, pantingly, by her Uncle's side, saying:

"Uncle—will you—make—that man—leave here?" Pointing to Leon Wells, Claud Mitchel, as he entered the door at that moment and still laughing.

“Why?” Asked Crieg.

“He kissed me!”

Crieg looked angry but the rest laughed.

“Sir,” began Crieg angrily, but Claud interrupted with:

“I would like to know if a man hasn’t the right to kiss his own wife after——”

Crieg confronted him still more angry.

“Your wife! What do you mean?”

“Father,” said Claud, “explain my masking under this name, will you?”

While this explanation was going on, Orabelle went softly from the room to where her Aunt was reading, and went up close to her before she said:

“Claud has come,” in a voice choked with laughter; “Come and meet him.”

She drew her Aunt into the other room in time to hear Mr. Mitchel say: “Yes, this is my son Claud.”

Mr. Crieg called Orabelle to his side then, and asked her if she knew who had come; and she answered: “Yes.”

"Shall I send him away, now?" He asked, a merry twinkle in his eyes.

"Do as you please," she said, determined not to show Claud whether she cared or not; "but I will never forgive him for stealing that kiss, Uncle," she as quickly added.

"Oh, yes you will, and kiss him in the bargain; for, I am sure you love him."

"Oh, Uncle!" she cried and started to leave the room.

"No, no you don't!" Cried Claud as he caught her. "Orabelle, father says you have kept your vow, so far, now fulfil the rest of it!"

"What part haven't I kept?" She coolly asked.

"My kiss I was to receive on my return."

"How do you know I have kissed no other man?" She saucily asked.

"Orabelle when I became sure you loved me as Leon Wells, I told you I loved you, which is true. Now, if you had broken your vow, would have been angry when I stole that kiss, a few moments ago? No, you would not have given

me that claw in the face, as you did," and he put his hand to his face upon the wounds.

"I am sorry now, but you deserved it for deceiving me in this way," she said teasingly.

"You carry the stripes, quite well, my son; but don't deserve them again," his father said as he placed his fingers on those red marks, left by the fingers of Orabelle.

"No, I will not, providing my Little Wife will forgive me this time."

She did not reply, for Haywood came in the room then and they turned to tell them his master had arrived.

The surprise for a moment made him forget his own errand.

"Mrs. Mitchel," he said, I have come to resign my position: for my year of probation is about expired and I am soon to leave for the east to marry Miss Baylis."

"Then we will all go with you," said Orabelle.

Their plans were soon completed for the eastern trip. A few weeks later they wit-

nessed the marriage of Lee Haywood and Lucy Baylis.

Mr. and Mrs. Claud Mitchel pass their winters in California and summers at the old home in Oneonta happy in each others love.

“I courted my wife after marriage,” said Claud, when asked by his associates how he won his wife.

THE END.



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